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THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE  
\* IN THE LIGHT OF THE WAR \*

W. M. CLOW D.D.



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THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE





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# The Christian Message

In the Light of the War

BY THE REV.

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## PREFACE

EVERY tragic event has its own illumination. It compels all who pass through it to endure the trial of whatever faith they have. The tragedy of this war has cast its own intense and searching light on the truths of the Gospel. It has compelled all to face old questions and new issues with a fresh and more solemn interest. In these chapters an endeavour has been made to interpret some of the leading truths of the Gospel, and to restate them so as to answer the questions and cast light upon the issues which have been raised.

This interpretation and statement has been made with a constant recollection of what may be called the creed of the trenches. It is evident that a doctrine which will not meet the experience and necessity of the man who is making a supreme sacrifice is not the doctrine of Christ. But it should be equally evident that there is some temptation to understate some of the more solemn certainties, and to yield to a sentimental and excusing view of the darker facts of human nature and of human life. The man who has neither knowledge nor experience of the Gospel cannot be set in the place of judgment upon Christian truth. In this restatement, therefore, the purpose of keeping in touch with that historic faith which has passed through as tremendous upheavals and faced as awful issues has been constantly maintained.

The writer's assurance is that the message of the old Gospel with its call to trust in God the Father, in a spiritual world to which man belongs, in an eternal life here and hereafter, and in the necessity of the redeeming life and death of Christ, will evoke that faith and hope and love which are the enduring realities.

*Glasgow.*



## CONTENTS

|                                        | PAGE |
|----------------------------------------|------|
| I.—THE WAR AND THE WILL OF GOD ..      | 9    |
| II.—NOT WASTE, BUT—SACRIFICE .. ..     | 21   |
| III.—CHRIST'S SACRIFICE AND OURS .. .. | 31   |
| IV.—THE SIN OF ONE HORIZON .. ..       | 41   |
| V.—THE SINS OF THE NATION.. ..         | 52   |
| VI.—BROTHERHOOD—BUT IN CHRIST ..       | 62   |
| VII.—YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN .. ..       | 73   |
| VIII.—THE CONDITIONS OF FORGIVENESS .. | 85   |
| IX.—THE PROVIDENCE OF PAIN .. ..       | 96   |
| X.—THE ANSWER TO PRAYER .. ..          | 107  |
| XI.—THE LIFE TO COME .. ..             | 119  |
| XII.—THE ETERNAL DESTINY OF THE FALLEN | 132  |
| XIII.—REST FROM WAR.. ..               | 142  |



# The Christian Message

## In the Light of the War

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### I. THE WAR AND THE WILL OF GOD

THE faith in the spiritual order has never been more seriously imperilled than by this war. We are all looking out on the far-flung battle line of the contending nations. We are witnesses of the muster of millions of soldiers, and the unrelenting manufacture of weapons and munitions. We have begun to place our confidence in the resourceful skill of inventive brains and the cunning of ruthless strategies—all impelled by the force of human passion. Our eyes are held by the leaping flame of war, and we have forgotten the shining of the stars. Even for Christian men the sure mercies of God have been bleached of their colour. Devout believers have not lost faith in prayer, but they have found it difficult to pray in faith. Those who have suffered heart-breaking losses, and those who are facing life maimed in body and broken in spirit, are haunted by doubts and troubled by strange fears. It is a time of the trial of faith.

The question, Why does God permit this war? does not perplex those who understand that God is a moral governor and uses moral means, and works with and through men. But the deeper question is, What is God's will and purpose in this world-wide war?

## I

There is only one sufficient word to describe this overwhelming visitation. That is the word—*tragedy*. True tragedy is a conflict which passes on to a crisis and ends in death. When closely examined the conflict in every tragedy is threefold. On the surface it is a conflict between good and evil, where truth and purity contend with hate and treachery and keen malice. When examined more deeply every tragedy is a conflict between good and good, where one ideal contests the power of place with another, and one noble passion comes into conflict with another high impulse. But when all the sources and issues of a great tragedy are resolved it is seen to be a conflict between free will and destiny. The actors in it plan and resolve and choose. Behind all their action there is an unyielding will which predestines the end.

In the classic drama of *Oedipus*, in the medieval legend of *Faust*, and in the more modern and more pathetic tragedy of *Hamlet*, we mark this threefold conflict. There is the strife between good and evil. There is the contending of duty with duty within the bewildered soul. Behind all there is a remorseless



Fate which predestines the destiny ; a moving, though invisible Hand, which weaves the web of life in time's roaring loom ; and, as Hamlet says, reviewing his own tragedy as it draws to its close in death,

“There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.”

This truth can be set out in bolder lines of proof from the larger field of the tragic histories of national decline and fall. In the conflict and disaster and final crash of Babylon and Assyria and Rome, and in the outbreak of every revolution which has closed a long era of oppression, overthrown a tranny, and visited a corrupt social order with a just doom, we see the conflict of tragedy passing on to its crisis and ending in death. As the issues clear, the certainty of an overruling will becomes more secure. But one tragic history has been set in the light of the inspired Word of God, and there this truth shines with a vivid clearness. That is the history of Israel, which is the epic drama of the Old Testament. We mark, in that story, the conflict between good and evil as it is recorded in the pages of the historians and the appeals of the prophets—of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. We note the conflict between one ideal of life and another, one loyalty and devotion and another obedience and desire. We see these contending with each other within the single soul of Jeremiah, and finding expression in his weeping appeals and his passionate lamentations. But behind all we are

shown what was so greatly dark to the men and women who strove and suffered. The historian and the prophet and the psalmist all lay bare the truth of God's overruling providence and the working of His purpose towards a far-off divine event. It was God's will which ordained the issues and determined the end.

In that light we see light. In the story of Israel's tragedy we can read and understand God's providence in all such tragedies. When we realize God's will and purpose in the devastating and heart-breaking issue of the history of Israel, we can understand His will and purpose in our wide-world war.

## II

Plainly *God's first purpose is judgment*. The waste and havoc, the pain and tears and death of this war, are the divine judgment upon iniquity, to vindicate righteousness. Righteousness is the keyword of Hebrew history. An unfaltering confidence in the God of righteousness, a deep inward loyalty to His commands, and a meek submission to His will were the articles of the Hebrew religion. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" That is the most succinct statement of the Hebrew ideal. But the later story of God's people is a long, slow, sometimes retarded, but in the end a swift and wilful decline. The carnal state of the surrounding heathen

nations fascinated the Hebrew people. Their idolatry invaded the minds of men who had been taught that there is only one invisible God. Base superstitions and foul habits were wrought out into obscene rites. Israel, seduced from her dependence on God, turned her back on her splendid past, declined from her unique spiritual ideal, refused her high mission, and cared little for being God's portion. She became a prey to corruption. There fell upon her a judgment sterner, more desolating, more overwhelming than ever fell upon any other people. Her privilege brought upon her the heavier penalty. Her responsibility was visited by a more dramatic doom. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." But for the humble remnant Israel would have become God's cast-away. Her valiant men were slain. Her people were deported. Only the meanest of the people were left to scavenge for a meagre living among the ruins of the blackened rock of Jersalem. Her tragedy was a judgment of God.

To-day the divine judgment is visiting the nations of Europe. God is not the God of the Hebrews only. He is the moral governor and the judge of the whole earth. This heart-breaking waste, this burning up even of houses of God with fire, these cities which have become heaps of ruin, these precious memorials which have perished, these fair lands which have been ravaged, and become the burying places of millions

of dead—what are they but the judgment of God? As the long trails of prisoners pass to the misery of their captivity, as the wounded and maimed lie in the hospitals, as the blinded and broken walk through our streets, as the lament of those who weep is heard in our households—what are we witnessing but the judgment of God? The innocent, as in all judgment, suffer with the guilty. In the solidarity of the race and of the nation, and of the family, the stroke of judgment falls upon the just and the unjust. Yet the true reason for this divine penalty is carnal pride, long cherished hate, malicious envy, base treachery, ungodly ambition, and on these, however men may think to escape, the judgment of God always falls. In this war, however long may be its course, and however varying may seem its chances, God's judgment will vindicate righteousness in the end. "Thinkest thou this, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

### III

*God's second purpose is discipline.* Judgment is God's strange work. It is not His highest or His dearest purpose. He punished Israel. He cast her down from her seat. He humbled her pride. But His further purpose was her discipline of purification, that she might be restored to her place and privilege.

In the years of exile and captivity in Babylon He purged His people from their sins. The Hebrew captives were marched across the desert to Babylon in hopeless despair. They sat down to weep by the river when they remembered Zion. They had been a stiff-necked and stubborn-minded people. They had cherished worldly ambitions, had become eager for earthly aggrandisement, had swelled with pride over the enlargement of their boundaries, the wealth of their community, and the secular splendour of their throne. But as they remembered Zion, and went back in memory upon days of grace, their eyes were cleansed. Their hearts were chastened. Their faith saw with a clearer vision, and their loyalty burned with a purer flame. In the psalms of the exile there are the outpourings of that penitential spirit and that meek hope in God which make them the spiritual treasure of all believing men. They were purged from their folly. They became ashamed of their gross passions. They learned a higher wisdom. They discerned a nobler truth. As their own poets said, God was the refiner and purifier of silver. In the exile they were placed in His crucible, and the divine eye watched and waited, loved and pitied, until He brought them forth pure gold for His purpose.

Discipline to purify is one of God's purposes now. Not even the most secular mind can deny that the whole world had need of purgation. We may be most willing to believe that Germany and her allies

need nothing more evidently than the crucible of God's purifying fire. But it may be well for us to remember the publican in the temple, lest we occupy the place and pray the prayer of the Pharisee. One of our leading economists has declared that from the year 1895 the whole world has known a period of unexampled material prosperity. In that increase of wealth, and luxury, and ease, every nation has shared. In these twenty years or so the lust of dominion has been indulged without shame. The policies of aggrandisement have been openly professed. The desire for the chief place in the sun has been the haunting ambition not only of rulers, and of governments, but of their peoples. A more stubborn pride with more daring dreams of empire and a less controlled gluttony for place and pleasure has marked every modern community. Need we wonder that God's discipline is abroad among men? If the madness and wickedness of these evil lusts is laid bare, if the folly and shame of greed and hate and envy and treachery are brought home to men's consciences, if a new and nobler ideal of national life, with its variety and inspiration, and of international fellowship with its amity and peace, arises in men's minds, if a new charity and a new chivalry toward the weak, and a new sympathy between all classes of men should beat in our hearts—the historian in days to come will mark this war as one of God's marvellous disciplines to purify the people. He will set his seal to the Hebrew prophet's fine saying,

“When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”

#### IV

*God's third purpose is revelation.* A great tragedy is not only a judgment to condemn iniquity and vindicate righteousness. It is not only, as the Greek dramatists so insistently proclaim, a purifying discipline, a crucible to purge from alloy, a school of education and redirection. It is also the shining of a great light upon men who sit in darkness. A war tragedy is sometimes like a lightning flash on a pitch dark night, by which the whole heavens and earth are illumined, and men see the things which were hidden from their eyes, and become sure of truths they had neglected, forgotten, despised. In our tragedies God makes a fresh revelation.

That is the supreme truth of God's dealing with Israel in Babylon. They went into exile with mean thoughts of God, narrow self-centred conceptions of His purpose for them, and His message to them. They had unthinking and hard-featured hopes for each individual soul. They had no passion for the eternal presence and fellowship of God. Above all, they were unable to receive God's highest message of a Redeemer who should come to Israel and lead them on to a more glorious mission than even their most inspired prophets could discern. But as they awoke to a new repentance and a new faith they rose



to a greater thought of God, a new certainty of the worth and eternal value of the human soul, and a new assurance that they would be delivered from their exile and their bondage, and given a leader who would be their Redeemer. Out of exile they returned with these great hopes to wait for the consolation of Israel, and to find their splendid opportunity when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

That was God's revelation to Israel. A revelation has one certain mark and effect. *It gives new values.* When the revelation comes to an individual man, through God's spirit, he at once revalues his own life, his own soul, his own ideal, his own resources, his own duty. "All things are become new." When the revelation is given to a nation its people appraise with new values. What do we need more than this power to revalue our national life and all it should mean? Have not we and all other nations been valuing wealth too much and men too little? Have we not been setting width of empire in the chief place and nobility of spirit in the second? Have we not been counting temporal gain, worldly prosperity, soft ease, to be better than an enriched mind, an ennobled ideal, a quick and tender conscience? Have we not been putting all the kingdoms of this world above the kingdom of God? Have we not been passing by the cross of Christ and its sorrow, with eager eyes for, and mean subservience to, the thrones of gross and carnal splendour? What have been the con-

sequences? There are wrongs we have left undressed. There are conditions of life for which we have had no pity. There are modes of government which we have approved. There are habits which we have condoned. Behind these there has been a neglect of God and His worship, a mocking of Christ and His call, and a grieving and resisting of the Holy Spirit. If this war will humble our hearts and cleanse our lives, and renew our desires until we revalue all life, we shall find that it has given us power to see, and to pray for, the coming of the kingdom of God. That is God's highest will and purpose in the tragedy of this war.

One question remains. Men may pass through a tragedy and yet not be led to repentance. Never was there a tragedy so illumining as that of the cross. Its shining light down all the centuries has been that revelation which has compelled men to revalue all things of earth and time. Yet it is too easy to pass through a tragedy unrebuked, unchastened, unenlightened. When Jacob, in the most tragic hour of his life, spent his night of wrestling by the brook Jabbok he thought his antagonist was a man. As the morning broke he found, as behind all tragedy, that he was wrestling with God. In a great word of high desire, that took God's heart captive, he cried, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." That is the word that should be on our lips in regard to this war. It is God with whom we have to do. If we can

cling to Him, and if we can understand His will and purpose, these years of shadow, and of loss, and of pain, will not pass without our receiving an enlarging blessing.

## II. NOT WASTE, BUT—SACRIFICE

To what purpose is this waste ? is one of the questions which assail every mind who looks abroad on the course of this war. Waste there is, impoverishing, desolating, heart-breaking. There is the waste of wealth and treasure, of noble buildings and ancient memorials which can never be replaced. There is the waste of fair and fruitful lands, pillaged and blasted and scarred. There is the waste of human energies withdrawn from the enriching arts of peace, and devoted to the brutalizing havoc and horror of war. There is the waste of precious human lives, not only of dear ones lost in death, but of those who are maimed in body, distraught in mind, broken in spirit. Beyond these there are the men and women whose careers have been foiled, whose hopes are dead, whose homes are empty. How many who looked forward to a quiet sunset at eventide shall go down with sorrow to their graves !

### I

There are answers to this question which do not satisfy. One answer is akin to that which would have been given in the supper room at Bethany. This waste is merely the issue of a foolish caprice or a haughty pride. There are men who repeat the

carping of the disciples. They tell us that all this rapine and loss is merely the outflash of the human passions of murderous hate and pitiless greed. They are lavish in their condemnation of all the combatants, and refuse to believe that Providence has any part in it at all. But others who cannot think of a world without a controlling Governor make answer that this waste is disclosing to us the poverty of the Christian faith. The Christian faith, they declare, is not true to the facts of life, and not large enough for the problems it attempts to solve. That answer has been given outspoken expression by Sir Rabin-dranath Tagore in his address to a gathering of students in Tokyo. "The voice which comes to us through the din of war, the shrieks of hatred, the wailings of despair, through the churning up of the unspeakable filth which has been accumulating for ages in the bottom of this Christian civilization—this voice cries to our soul that the tower of national selfishness, which goes by the name of patriotism, which has raised its banner of treason against heaven, must totter and fall with a crash, weighed down by its own bulk, its flag kissing the dust, its light extinguished." This fierce rhetoric by an unbeliever is echoed among ourselves by men who make answer that the purpose of this waste is to condemn the base, or at least faulty, current conceptions of the mind of Christ, and to prove that all war, and especially this war, are alien to God's will and wholly unjustifiable.

But not one of these answers is true for those who believe that the Lord reigneth, and that He is the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Not one of them will satisfy those who are assured that God “plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.” Not one of them will content the minds of those who believe that, though God’s will is not always being done, His purpose can neither be blocked nor broken, and that all the havoc and horror of this war will work out, for His own people, God’s purpose of good.

## II

Let us turn back to the scene where first this question was asked. A Sabbath evening feast was given to Jesus, shortly before He was crucified, in the house of Simon the leper, in Bethany. Lazarus was there, and Martha served. Mary stole in behind Jesus, broke her fragile vessel of alabaster, and poured its ointment over His head. The details of the feast are unrecorded. The names of the guests are unchronicled. The deed itself is described in a single sentence. The focus of the story is this carping condemnation, “To what purpose is this waste?” It did seem an indefensible extravagance. Yet Christ pays it the highest encomium He ever uttered. “She hath wrought,” He says, “a good work on Me.” He goes further, and adds, “She hath done this for My burial.” Then He lifts this pouring out of the oint-

ment up to its great splendour when He says, "Where-soever this Gospel shall be preached, in the whole world, there also this, that this woman hath done, shall be told for a memorial of her." What does He mean? He means that its costliness, its spontaneity, its passion of love, make it an index to His own cross, and that Mary's deed was not waste—but sacrifice. There is the Christian answer to this question of waste.

When we take our stand below the cross Christ's meaning is brought home to our hearts. There has been no deed to which this question of waste seems so unanswerable as the death at Calvary. Had we asked the women who wailed and lamented Him, or Mary Magdalene, or His mother, Mary of Nazareth, as they stood near the cross, "To what purpose is this waste?" they would have had no reply. Had we spoken with His disciples who had beheld His glory, or called in the blind, and the lame, and the lepers, and the devil-driven, whom He had healed, they would have been smitten into silence. Why should so fair a life, so compassionate a power, so holy a spirit, die in such agony, in the prime of manhood, and in a common death with two malefactors. But interpret the cross of Christ by the deed of Mary. What did Jesus do? He took to Himself the alabaster box of His body. Within it, as within a shrine, there was placed His eternal spirit. In a deed of costliness, so great that we scarce can believe



it true; with a spontaneity, so self-forgetful that His acts and words through all the long hours of His dying are full of grace; and in a love passion, so enduring that all the waters of shame and denial and betrayal and scorn could not quench it, He poured forth His soul unto death, and the whole world is filled with the odour of the ointment. To-day even the most heedless who pass by look up at the cross to cry, "It was not waste; it was sacrifice."

### III

The light from this answer of Christ, both in word and deed, shines clearly on those *who have laid down their lives, as He did, for others*. We cannot apply this truth to those who have gone forth in hate and in envy, to be agents in an infamous aggrandisement. But to those who, with searching of heart and with shrinking of spirit, have gone forth to yield up their lives and have suffered the loss of much that is dear to them, there comes the message of Christ—it is not waste, it is sacrifice. We need not be greatly concerned with the waste of merely material things. The artist and the scholar will mourn for the loss of the priceless possessions and heirlooms of the past. Simple folk are shadowed when they think of those devastated lands smitten by the blast of war. But the human mind will train the hand to skill and produce again its works of art and beauty. New buildings as serviceable and as distinctive will arise.

In less than a generation the lands now lying in heaps of ruin will laugh with harvest once more. But the waste of life, of hope, of love, will never be repaired, and the one answer to the insistent question over such loss is, It is not waste, but sacrifice.

To die is not always noble. Men have gone to their death in some wild and daring mood impelled by a strange emotion. Men have died for unworthy causes and for ignoble ends. Such dying cannot be named with the splendid name of sacrifice. The sacrifice which is after the manner of Christ is made in love and in compassion, and is made that righteousness may prevail. It is not too much to say that those who have answered the call and gone forth to risk and lose their lives on our far-flung battlefields, or amidst the heart-shaking perils of the sea, or in the still more courageous conflicts in the air, have made a sacrifice after the manner of Christ.

We need not make too strict enquiry into the mind and spirit of every man who sprang out of the trenches and charged across the open, knowing that he was looking into the grisly face of death. We need not hark back to the lives into which so many had heedlessly drifted. This we can say, that no man left our shores inspired by a noble passion of deliverance and of rescue, moved by a high spirit which was resolved to defeat and to destroy an arrogant militarism, without sharing in the mind of Christ, and imitating the manner of His sacrifice. These are the motives

which have animated hundreds of men, and keep them steadfast in the midst of daily suffering and hourly peril, with their faces set to the completion of their high task. It seems almost vain to ask "To what purpose is this waste?" They are following in the steps of Him who made His great sacrifice, and they are pouring out the spikenard of their lives in His glory.

Here we enter into one of the supreme comforts to those who have suffered a desolating loss. There are widows and orphans for whom all life is to be sadly impoverished. There are fathers and mothers whose thresholds will never be crossed by the feet of those who are dear to them. There are men and women who will never be able to stand in the ranks of those who carry on the world's work and bear its burdens. Yet for all who suffer there shines out this ennobling consolation that their dear ones have offered themselves in sacrifice after the manner of Christ. In a private letter since published\* there is the record of the experience of a father who had lost his son. He had gone over to France to search for the body in the Devil's Wood where the boy's company had been cut to pieces. "He found no trace of the one he sought, and I think it was better so. Only, he knew that he was there—among the harvest waiting to be gathered in. For, as he stood in the stricken wood of death, he saw the glory of life spread over it, and

\* *Spectator*, January 16, 1917, pp. 40-41.

he found himself lifting a thankful heart that his boy lay there—a sharer in the offering. Seeking the dead, he found unexpectedly, instead of a miasma of misery and woe, the incense of accepted sacrifice, and he heard the call of God.” For many the eternal consolations of Christ abound. But for all who have lost their dear ones there shall come a day in the future years when they can look back, with eyes untroubled by tears, and say—“It was not waste; it was sacrifice.”

#### IV

There is one other thought which gives this pouring out of the treasure of precious life an even greater moral beauty. As we lift our eyes from its awful cost and look abroad upon its final issues, we can say it was not waste but sacrifice, and sacrifice *for the purpose for which Christ died*. Our Lord died to bring in an everlasting redemption, to deliver this poor sin-driven world from its enslavement, to rescue the perishing, and to bring back the lost. In the same way this protest against iniquity, this going forth to succour the down-trodden, exacting this sacrifice of life, is certain to issue in the coming of that kingdom of God which was Christ’s supreme purpose. Men are about to be brought to believe more securely in the God of the kingdom, as a God of justice and retribution. They are going to understand anew what the kingdom is, and to see its righteousness, its peace, and its joy in the Holy Ghost. Even to-day,

in the midst of the strife, men have come to realize that these three—righteousness and peace and joy—are the most desirable things in the world, without which life is not worth living. Even the most careless of men are realizing the supremacy of righteousness, and the baseness of those who mock it by their passions of greed and hate and barbaric cruelty. Already men have come to hunger after peace, until their wills are almost weakened in the carrying on of a righteous war. And even upon the dullest heart there has arisen a new light, as they have dimly understood the uplifting felicity of that joy in things unseen and in the certainty of God's blessing, which is the joy in the Holy Ghost. Men are going to see also the glory of the cross, and to understand its meaning, and to be ashamed that they have not yielded to its power. This great step forward, this new vision of spiritual certainties, this coming of the kingdom of God are the issues, purchased by those whose sacrifice has been offered for the purpose dearest to Christ.

It may seem strange to make this claim for this instrument of war. War is not God's only method, nor is it His noblest. But war is one of God's methods, and it seems to be His last resort. It is His surgery when all else has failed. It is a truth that, with all its curse, war has been not only illuminating and purifying, but strangely effective, as an agency for bringing in God's kingdom. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."

Without shedding of blood there is no remission of the perils which continually threaten to engulf the civilization of Christ. In 739 Charles Martel and his Christian soldiers met and drove back a militant and merciless Mohammedanism which was pressing onwards in the subjection of Europe to its coarse and degrading domination. In 1800 our fathers realized that the only way of recovering the liberties of the nations and of putting down the despotism of a military autocrat was by that long and exhausting war which won its final triumph at Waterloo. In 1860 the nobler spirits of the United States of America were driven to the unwilling conviction that only by war could the curse of slavery be lifted from their national life. What waste there was of wealth and treasure, and above all of precious life! Now we see that it was not waste, but sacrifice for those things for which Jesus died. Those who suffered, as we now see, filled up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." So, to-day, men of faith have the vision of a modern civilization delivered from the lust of dominion. They see all men casting from them barbaric ideals, and disowning with shame a brutal frightfulness. They are assured that in the better time to come nation shall not make war upon nation. But that issue shall be attained only because men have known how to lay down their lives for the purpose for which Christ died. The judgment of history will say regarding the offerings made by those whom we mourn—It was not waste; it was sacrifice.

*Atonement*

### III. CHRIST'S SACRIFICE AND OURS

THE atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a truth which has been out of favour in recent years. Preachers have been shy of giving it a foremost place in their message. Its solemn sanctions have been seldom heard in the pleading of their prayers. Even in the observance of the Lord's Supper, where Christ's death is showed forth, the meaning and the power of the vicarious and expiatory atonement for sin have been left in the shadow. Men have grown rhythmic in their praise of the teaching of the Master. The grace and wisdom and pathos of His words, the power and compassion of His deeds, and the stainless holiness of His life have been set forth with impassioned devotion. But His sacrifice has been a stumbling-block and an offence. Many have given themselves to proclaim the reconciliation of man to man through Christ, who seem not to have come in sight of the reconciliation of God to man, and man to God, in the cross of Christ. Yet this should be the first line in our confession. "I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."

In the events of this war sacrifice has been given

a new valuation, and its necessity and grace and power have been set in clear light. The word has been heard ringing through the appeals of our statesmen. It has lustred all the great poems which have been born in the hearts of those who have suffered. It has become sacred and even beautiful on the lips of those who sorrow. It has thrilled the dullest spirit and lifted up the most downcast hearts.

Grievous the pain ; but, in the day  
When all the cost is counted o'er,  
Would it be best that ye should say :  
“ We lost no loved ones in the war ” ?

Who knows ? But proud then shall ye stand  
This best, most honoured boast to make :  
“ My lover died for his dear land,”  
Or, “ My son fell for England’s sake.”

For one thing is clear to the whole listening world, and that is that our nation, with all its sins and faults, its heedless masses and its saddening crowd of pleasure-seekers, answered the call with the offering of sacrifice. It might have declined its share in this momentous struggle. It might have increased its gain and made its world-wide dominion more secure. But it has spent its wealth, poured out its precious lives, and shed its bitter tears in a sacrifice whose glory shall never fade. Even those who are driven to protest for conscience sake, who believe that Jesus does not sanction war or the use of force under any circumstances, who have striven to turn the nation’s mind into an acceptance of wrong without an attempt at



redress, realize the splendour of our sacrifice, and the word has been given a new grace in their eyes.

## I

Now sacrifice is not always noble. Sacrifice is noble only when inspired by a noble motive. A motive is simply a purpose realized, accepted, and willed. But men have made sacrifices for base ends. There are the sacrifices of hate, and there can be no doubt that men have marched to certain death in platoons motivated by hate for their foes. There are the sacrifices of greed, when, both in peace and war, men have risked and lost their lives for the sake of gain. There are the sacrifices of a lust of dominion. The German song *Deutschland über Alles* may have been, in its writer's mind, only a patriotic appeal for unity among the German peoples. But it has been sung as the expression of this lust of world dominion, and men have lost all in its service. Even the pride and glory of a world-wide empire, as that ideal gleams before the Anglo-Saxon race, will move men to singular sacrifices. And so subtle are our temptations, so often is Satan transfigured as an angel of light, and so fair may seem both personal and national ambitions which are tainted with envy and pride, that great-souled men may lay down their lives for them. To-day the light shines in upon the heart of all sacrifice. What have been the ends for which our nation has squandered its treasures? Wherein they have been

ignoble, our sacrifice shall be found to be in vain. But surely as we scan them in the clear light we find that their motives give them nobility.

## II

To begin with, our sacrifice has been made for this end: *righteousness*. In this war our nation might have stood carefully aloof. The part of the neutral was open to her. The two facts that she was unprepared for it, and that her statesmen patiently and even humbly did their utmost to prevent its outbreak, prove that the war was not the seeking of English-speaking men. But when righteousness was mocked, scorned, outraged, when solemn treaties were counted as scraps of paper, when pledges, solemnly and publicly made, were broken with a jest, when high obligations of justice were brushed aside, then we heard the call to sacrifice for righteousness' sake. As a people we cherished a more poignant sorrow than we dared express when our beloved kinsmen across the sea in the United States of America stood aside and seemed intent only on "the full dinner pail." We realized the difficulty of their position with their so composite a people. But we thought that had they been given a clear vision of the peril of righteousness they would have dared the risk. Now our kinsmen stand beside us, and the address of Mr. Lansing to the Officers' Training Corps in New York sets this high purpose in clear light. "The

deliberate breach of faith and the utter disregard of right and life have a deep meaning. We know now that the German Government is inspired with ambitions which menace human liberty, and that to gain its end it does not hesitate to break faith, to violate the most sacred rights, or to perpetrate intolerable acts of inhumanity." These are the words of one who proclaims the call to sacrifice for righteousness' sake.

Again, our sacrifice has been made for this end: *redemption*. There were many who were not moved by the appeal of righteousness. They were inclined to think that there were wrongs on both sides, and they were bewildered in mind. But when Serbia was ruthlessly stricken down, when Poland was overrun, when Belgium was trampled upon and its treasures looted, its famous buildings burned with fire, its ancient memorials razed to the ground, and its men, women, and children cruelly entreated and foully dishonoured, their moral passion was fused. And when France was overrun by hordes of pitiless and brutal soldiery, whose officers felt no restraints, either of honour or of chastity, they felt that the time of sacrifice had come. In their souls they heard the call to redeem these stricken, enslaved, desecrated peoples. They left the studies which had made their lives so full of interest. They relinquished the careers with which their hopes were bound up. They bade farewell to home and to love. They went out to face

overwhelming numbers amidst the swamps of Flanders and in the valleys of France. They have come back broken and maimed. They pass through our streets in quiet dignity. Many of them are lying buried in some corner of a foreign field. Yet no eye is so dull in moral vision as not to see the splendour of this sacrifice for redemption's sake.

Again, our sacrifice has been made for this end: *life*. Life is a gift which must be kept and cherished. But he is not noble who counts his own life dear to him, who will not lose it for the sake of the life of others. What has seemed to many to be the most abhorrent and even devilish feature of the aggressors in this war has been the utter disregard of life. The German rulers ~~have~~ declared that they were willing to extinguish the life of every other nation to promote the well-being of their own. They ~~have~~ not only invented and used forbidden weapons of war, but they ~~have~~ practised, and are practising, a "frightfulness" which wreaks its vengeance on the innocent and the helpless. We have but to recall the beginning of that submarine warfare in the sinking of the *Lusitania*, or those later manifestations of it in the shelling of the men who have taken to the boats, or those individual cruelties linked with the names of Miss Cavell and Captain Fryatt, but practised with an equally diabolic pitilessness on thousands of unknown folk, to realize this utter disregard of human life. It has not been life only as the possession of a

breathing and moving man. It has been life in its highest aspects—life with liberty, with joy in things pure and good, with peace and open opportunities, with noble ideals of brotherhood and fellowship and intercourse. For these supreme blessings of life brave men heard the call to make the supreme sacrifice of their lives for the life of others.

Again, our sacrifice has been made for this end: *love*. We are climbing the steep of the high calling of sacrifice now. No sacrifice reaches its noblest unless it is inspired by love. It has been the love of righteousness, of that redemption whose highest form is a passion for souls, and of that life which is every man's inalienable possession, which has inspired our bravest and dearest. But there is a love which is higher still. It is simply a love for men, and their well-being and their exaltation in character and will. This love may fasten itself upon a native land, or a kindred people. But in its length and breadth and depths and height it takes in all humanity. It loves the German people. It is pitiful over their blindness. It grows pathetic over their misguided and wilful aggression. It has times of sorrow when it recalls the millions of their maimed and their dead. Its highest purpose is that love may yet abound, that nations sundered by hate may come to see all the wrong and the shame of their enmity and envy, and all the baseness of their worldly ambitions. It longs and prays for the day when the one great Name

shall be dear to all mankind, and those who once were foes shall grasp each other's hands, seeking from each other forgiveness, and asking from each other a communion in the Holy Ghost. The cry of the German soldier who surrenders, *Kamerad*, may have little meaning on his lips. But those moved by love look out toward the dawning of a morning when, with mingled shame and patience, he shall utter it with a new note of desire. Surely within the heart of the purest and the bravest of our men and women there is a sorrow which is almost an anguish, and a craving which is sometimes a passion, for the coming of that day when love will prevail. It is because they are sure that all that hinders the coming of love, all that stirs up strife, all that drills men and establishes a military autocracy prevents, and will prevent, the coming of love, that they have gone forth to make their sacrifice.

### III

Let us lift our eyes from the battlefields of Europe to the Cross of Calvary. There we see these four truths shining in their perfect beauty. Christ died for righteousness' sake—to justify the law and to make it honourable. Christ died because He refused to compromise with the throne of iniquity, and His cross is His protest against the unrighteousness of His time. Christ died also for redemption's sake. He gave His life for the sheep. He came to give His life a

ransom for many. His body was broken and His blood shed for the remission of sins. He brought in the everlasting redemption that sets men free from their condemnation and bondage. Christ died, too, for life's sake. He came that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly. We are set free from sin to have our fruit unto holiness. We are purged from dead works to serve the living God. We have been redeemed that we might enter into newness of life, and might be conformed unto the likeness of God's dear Son. His sacrifice is the source and spring of life here and life evermore. And Christ died for love's sake. He died that the enmity of the human heart against God, and the rebellion of the human will against the Divine will, and the estrangement and alienation of man to the Almighty Lover might pass away. He died that God's holiness might be able to pardon man's sin, and God's love might be expressed and made potent in the sacrifice which expiates man's iniquity. So as the Cross of Christ is bathed in the light that shines from the glory of our sacrifice, we are filled with wonder, love, and praise, and we stand amazed that the atoning death is not the chiefest theme on all Christian lips.

The argument from the sacrifice of man does not rise to the full height of the sacrifice of Christ. That is, and it shall remain, solitary and unique. There is no service of man to man, and no sacrifice of man for man, which can image and picture the sacrifice



of God's Son for His lost, and wilful, and rebel children. There is no sacrifice but that of Christ's where He who offered it has become so identified with those who have sinned. There is no sacrifice but that of Christ's where holiness which has been defied makes all the amends and all the reparation. There is no sacrifice but that of Christ's which goes forth with the message, even while the enmity is in full command of the soul. "It is expedient," said Caiaphas, "that one man should die for the people." The old High Priest was setting sacrifice on its lowest level—that of an unwilling victim. "Greater love," said Jesus, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He was lifting up sacrifice to its highest human motive. No higher than that can man ever rise. But God in Christ rises higher still. Above all human analogy, we are told, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Herein is love," writes John, setting forth its fulness, "not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." That was the love that could pray for its murderers in the hour of its sacrifice, and that is the sacrifice which atones for the sin of the world. The nearer our sacrifice can approach to Christ's, the sooner will the day of righteousness, and of redemption, of a new life, and of a new love appear among men.



#### IV. THE SIN OF ONE HORIZON

ONE of the supreme Christian certainties is that man, who is not only a being of earth and time, but a child of God, has more than one horizon. The whole New Testament is pervaded by this truth. It gives a solemn accent to Christ's words. It is the implication behind His parables. He makes it clear when He speaks to Nicodemus of "earthly things" and "heavenly things," and His disciple, Paul, sets it in a striking antithesis when he speaks of "the things seen which are temporal," and "the things unseen which are eternal." All men have one horizon. There is this world of things seen, with its realities open to the senses, to be counted, weighed, and measured. There is this present world, with its methods, its forces, its rewards. But there is another world, with its realities open to the spirit. There are those sober certainties of truth and goodness and beauty, of love and peace and joy, and behind these, the reality of God, the presence of Jesus, and the transforming power of the Holy Ghost. The decisive distinction between men is between those who live with one horizon, and those who live with two.

The sin of this world, Jesus said, is that they "believe not on me." That sin has a distinctive manifestation in every age. To-day it is this sin of the one horizon. Behind the life lived by multitudes, with its craving for sensuous and even sensual pleasures, its worldly ambitions and its pitiless greed, there is this certain fact that they are living with one horizon. Even in the case of large numbers, who take Christ's name on their lips, life is carried on with a secular basis, and their hunger is of the earth, earthy. This war, with its coarse passions, its callous wrongs, its shameful treacheries, and its merciless cruelties is the handwriting on the broad page of history which proclaims that men have ceased to live with the outlook to the spiritual horizon.

## I

When we make the enquiry as to the reason of this spiritual blindness the answer is simple and sufficient. We are living in an age of declining faith. The Son of man has come, and He does not find faith on the earth. The sea of faith was once at the full, and, while we must not forget the millions of sincere believers, and the devotion of humble God-fearing men, yet, to-day, the tide is

Retreating to the breath  
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

The phases of this decline can be simply set down. The first is *the absorption in this present world.*

Any absorption in any one energy or passion tends to make a man apathetic to other interests, and to deaden his mind to other realities.

The power to apprehend other truths and to appreciate other ideals withers and dies. The man who looks continually into the leaping flames of a furnace loses the power to see the pale gold of an autumn sunset. He whose ears are constantly assailed by the clang of hammers cannot hear the soft melody of a great music. The scientific enquirer, absorbed by his study of the facts and laws of nature, cannot be roused to the rapture of the poet, or the devotion of the mystic. If a man will live wholly among the things of time, if he will "mind earthly things," if he will allow himself to be absorbed in the interests and rewards of this present world, he will soon cease either to mind, or even to see, the things of the world beyond. The reader of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* will remember that, when he had closed the volume of that marvellous history, from which the very thought of God has been stubbornly excluded, the spiritual world had almost passed out of sight. He had become so absorbed by the splendid pageant of history, with its record of the pride and state of emperors, the high ambitions of a conquering people, the policies of statesmen, the tramp of armies and the clash of contending forces throughout those centuries of strife and sin, that God and heaven and the love of Christ were like a fading dream.

This is the master temptation of our time. Never was this present world more interesting, more fascinating, more engrossing. When we open our newspapers we are like men sitting before a stage where the curtain has risen and we are held, forgetful of all else, by the words and deeds of the actors in the drama. We give ourselves with an intense concentration to the pursuit of our ambitions and the prosecution of our interests. Our desires are keener than those of our fathers. Our pleasures tempt our appetites more vividly. Our lives have become fevered and exhausting. We are like men around a gambling table who have eyes and ears for nothing but the throw of the dice. We are men of one horizon.

## II

The second phase is *the haze which has fallen upon the certainties of the faith*. We are living in a time of more daring question than before. The preacher of a generation ago had only to recall the unquestioned verities of God, as the maker of our bodies and the Father of our spirits, of the solemn certainty of judgment to come, and the awful responsibility of rejecting the grace of God, to cause the awe of the eternal to descend on every conscience. To-day a haze rests on the truths which were once surely believed among us. The great historic confessions no longer hold men's minds with a clear consent. The Bible is no

longer read as a decisive word of counsel. Its messages are not heard as freighted with undeniable authority. God's justice and holiness, and his moral reaction against sin, have become dim to the common understanding. Prayer is, with too many, a mood of helpful meditation, and not a method of prevailing with God. The immortality of the soul has become a wistful question, to which we cling when we bury our dead. Even Jesus seems to many to be merely a wondrously beautiful character, a sublime peasant who walked by the Lake of Galilee, whose sentences allure us by their music, more than they move our wills, and hold our souls, by their power. It is doubtless true that this haze has fallen upon our mind because we have consented to the folly of applying scientific tests and using scientific weights and scales for spiritual realities. It may also be true that there is an urgent call to examine, and explore, and to state, these commanding and triumphant certainties in fresh and simple language. But the chief reason is that we have been living under the power of an earthly horizon, and the haze upon the certainties is within our own souls. While the haze is there we shall not live by the power of the world to come.

### III

The third phase is *the failure of the witness of believers*. Our greedy absorption in the things of time, and the

haze which has fallen upon the certainties of the faith, are undoubted elements in our unbelief. But there is a third cause, which, with the mass of men, has even more power. Faith in God and in the unseen is as natural to the soul as a belief in the reality of this present world is to the man who looks out upon it with his eyes. Every child is a born believer, and every man who denies is a soul which has lost its faith. We are led into faith and its renewal not by a cogent logic, or by a closely woven historical proof. Faith in the unseen with many is an inheritance. With others it is a contagion—a blessed contagion. With others, and especially with the young, and perhaps with most pure-minded, high-souled women, it is an intuition. We seldom realize how much we owe to having been born in a Christian land, brought up within the Christian Church, and led into daily fellowship with simple and loyal believing folk. Faith in most of us has been born by the witness, not only in word, but in gracious and lowly and lovely deed, of some believing man or woman. There is no proof which is so potent for the young soul as that of a father whose morning prayer is the evidence of his fellowship with God, or that of a mother to whom Christ and His presence, and the power of His grace, are the dearest certainties and convictions of her heart. In the life of John Cairns we are told of that night, when, as the shadows fell, his father died, and his mother gathered around her the little flock of helpless

children. She took the Bible, and in a soft, low voice, gave out the words of the one hundred and seventh Psalm, in the simple and beautiful Scottish metrical version :

“ The storm is changed into a calm,  
At His command and will,  
So that the waves which raged before,  
Now quiet are and still.”

Which child of that little company, as they knelt while their mother's voice rose in submission and supplication to the heavenly Father, could fail to be a believer in God and the unseen ? To-day is it not the constant accusation of those without the fold that men and women, who proclaim themselves believers, fail in their testimony to their Lord. We see confession without obedience, profession without practice, the form of godliness with the denial of its power, a name to live and yet dead. What issue can we expect but a decline of faith in the unseen, and the conviction on the part of the men of this world that there is only one horizon ? Dr. Walter C. Smith has described in *Borland Hall* the tragic episode of the lost faith of a young and ardent soul. His mother had been to him the angel in the house. Her words had been as binding as the Scriptures. Her life had been the very robe of uprightness. But after her death he found that, through all her years, she had practised a hidden fraud, and robbed another, for this son's sake, of his due. In the anguish of the

young man's spirit at this discovery, he found that his faith in things unseen had fallen into ruins.

Now, heaven, and all the gods rushed madly down,  
Like Dagon's house, when its main pillar fell ;  
And truth, and right, and all things clean and white,  
Angel and saint, and the eternal crown,  
All, all were lost, in thickest mist of Hell.

Gone the fond vision of his trustful youth,  
Gone all the awe of natural reverence,  
Gone the pure love that seemed of Heaven above,  
Gone all the certainty of love and truth—  
The fell-mist clouded every higher sense."

Have not we all, by the failure of our witness, extinguished some one's faith? If we were living supernatural lives, no man would doubt the supernatural. If we walked down our streets clothed only with sanctity, if, in our very bearing and by the light upon our faces, we gave witness that we knew of the further horizon, all men would be compelled to lift their eyes toward it. Christ is the author and the perfecter of our faith, not only because He was the great believer, but because He bore such unfaltering testimony, that, men who saw Him, saw the Father also, and those who lived with Him were sure that there was a Father's house and a Father's presence beyond earth and time.

#### IV

Where is healing for this sin? How can we be released from the tyranny of the one horizon, and find the other standing out in sunny outline, brave and



clear? As we have said, faith is for many an inheritance, or a contagion, or an intuition. Such a faith has a high value. It has power to keep our lives clean and our honour secure. No one can play the part of the man with the muck-rake who has a faith bred in him through the faith of others. But that is not the sure confidence in God and in His Son, which makes us "more than conquerors." What we need is the faith of a fresh and individual experience. We need to come to that hour when we hear God speaking to us, when we are sure of Christ and of His personal love and care, whoever may stand with words of proud denial. "Now we believe," said the men of Samaria, "not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of Life." Mark the sequence in the experience. It is first "heard" as a message from one who has climbed a height we have not dared. It is then "seen." The vision dawns upon the soul. It is then "looked upon." The truth and certainty are beheld with eyes that discern their glory. It is then "handled." There is the close, personal, believing, adoring touch. An experience like that creates a faith which lives ever in sight of the further horizon.

May I venture to quote one of the most vivid of

recent testimonies to the power of this experience ?  
“ I have seen with the eyes of God. I have seen the naked souls of men—stripped of circumstance. Rank and reputation, wealth and poverty, ignorance and knowledge, manners and uncouthness—these I saw not. I saw the naked souls of men. I saw who were slaves and who were free, who were beasts and who were men, who were contemptible and who were honourable. I have seen with the eyes of God. I have seen the vanity of the temporal and the glory of the eternal. I have seen the victory of the cross. O Death, where is thy sting ? ”\*

But one experience is not enough. The initial hour so solemn, so unforgettable, so determining, in which a man enters into his covenant with Christ is indispensable. It is the gate into the fellowship and the service. But this experience is not sufficient for all the years to come. We are sometimes told that there is a dangerous age in life. It is sadly true that men and women who have walked with high resolve and kept their early vows come to an age when some failure within, combining with some temptation without, issues in a fall of shame. There is an age when the forces of nature decline and the pride of life, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye assail a weakened defence with overwhelming power. But there are more dangerous ages than one. We come to period after period when the battle

\* *The Student in Arms*, p. 94.

with evil comes to a crisis, and we do not always pass through it unscathed. In that crisis it will be found that the further horizon has faded from our eyes. What we need is another experience, a fresh baptism, a new consecration, a more complete surrender. If we kept our eyes continually lifted to the world beyond, if we set our mind on things above, if we looked away unto Jesus, the further horizon would be continually in our view, and we would follow His steps with faces shining with the light of the life to come.

*in (national)*

## V. THE SINS OF THE NATION

THE question which troubles many minds and haunts many consciences is—Are we a Christian nation at all? The methods of our statesmanship, the morals of our business and social life, and the customs and habits of the masses of the people, give us pause. Chaplains at the Front are sometimes aghast when they realize that there are millions of soldiers who take no interest in the religious life. They are indifferent to the Church. They have nothing in common with those who live under the inspiration of the Christian verities. They never pray. It is true that they display a splendid heroism and a kindly compassion. But these are not distinctively Christian virtues. The Greek died at Marathon. The Roman soldier bore his fellow through the desert at the peril of his own life. Men on leave are saddened by the streets of our cities when they return. They are amazed at the tide of sin and shame, and all the splash of idle frivolity which meets their eyes. A young soldier, solemnized by facing the issues of life and death, stood for an hour at Piccadilly Circus. What he saw and heard roused him to ask if such people were worth saving at all. Were we to ask our foes, they would frame a condemning indictment.

They would call our profession of religion a habit and repute hypocrisy, and our worship, in all its forms and customs, an apology for our greed and ambition and a mask for the wild and wolfish desires of our hearts.

## I

The answer to the question requires a closer and more patient observation. It can be based only on a classification. We should ask rather, Are we Christian or heathen? Or we may ask, Are we Christian, but not Christian enough? No man who has gone ashore at Shanghai, or walked down the bazaar in Damascus, or spent a night near an African kraal, will hesitate in his answer. London, with all its vice and crime, is a Christian city. The British people are Christian in conscience and ideal, and their laws endeavour to frame Christian ethics into a code of life. Their charities and philanthropies, their support of liberty and justice throughout the regions beyond, their chivalrous propagation of the Christian faith, are marked by the whole world as Christian in purpose and motive. The voices that prevail among us are those that proclaim truth and honour and mercy. Even in this war, the moral passion and protest, the quick sense of wrong, the outflow of pity, and the costly sacrifice of precious lives and dearest hopes, have been born from above by the Spirit of Christ. We cannot claim that all our motives have been free

from self-will and self-interest. But we can declare that in the same way as a Christian man may name himself as a believer, despite faults and flaws which make him ashamed, so we are a Christian nation. There are blots on our national life and spots on our national character. But the accusations we make against ourselves would be without point unless they were made against our disloyalties to the Christian ideal.

## II

Every nation has its own ideals and standards, and, therefore, its own distinctive sins. The Greek stood aloof in a haughty and contemptuous and sensual disdain. The Roman fell under the snare of a lust of imperial dominion. The people of Israel, despite their prophets and their humble believing folk, fell into their national sin of a craving for the pomp and ritual of a God-forgetting idolatry. Only exile and captivity purged that coarse and fleshly passion out of their hearts. The sins of our nation do not grow from a root like any of these. Our constant temptation, due to our practical minds and our self-willed hearts, is *materialism*. It is that sin which the Apostle summed up in his ashaming sentence, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Worldliness, often in subtle forms, is the root sin of the British mind and heart. Both our personal and our national lives are built

up on a secular basis. Men who live decent lives and make an open religious profession conduct their businesses by an entirely and completely material ideal. To heap up riches is, by open confession, the chief end that vast numbers set before them. To make oneself secure, and to attain a position of consequence in the world, to be able to spend largely on foreign travel, and to purchase and enjoy costly pleasures, complete the ambitions of millions of men. In every statesman's memoirs there is a record of the terrific competition for pre-eminence and place and title. The Christian Church and the Christian ministry have been infected by this same love of the power and show of worldly prominence. A deep conviction is lodged in the minds of the masses, and finds expression in the outspoken profanities of a secular Press, that a gluttony for the things of the world fills the hearts of those who serve at God's altars. In a word, the average man among us believes that a man's life "consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." In so far as our motives in this war are tainted and base, that is due to this national sin of a worldly materialism. We have loved this present world as did Demas the deserter.

### III

This national sin thus broadly described has three express manifestations. *The first is in our imperial*

*polity*. We are all proud of the splendour of our dominion. We have painted the map of the world red, and we make our boast of it. To trace with the finger a course that begins in the Channel Islands and passes on through Gibraltar, Malta, Port Said, Aden, Colombo, Singapore, Hongkong, Samoa, British Guiana, and Jamaica—and we have not mentioned any one of the broad dominions which are our pride—is to reveal that we have put a girdle round the earth and fastened it with ambitious hands. The loss of a single bit of foreshore in any of the continents would cut us to the quick.

A fair defence can be made of our Imperial dominion. We are an island people, a sea-going race, and have been driven to adventure into distant lands. We are a missionary people, and many of our possessions have been won by the Gospel before they have been protected by the sword. Our polity has been expressed in a wise government of the heathen peoples under our rule. Our empire has been regarded as a trust, and we have governed, in great measure, in the interests of the people, with a notable increase in their well-being and development. Yet it would be hypocritical to claim that our polity has been always dictated by the highest motives. We all remember the fever which ran in the veins of our people for a certain ambitious Imperialism, which found expression in Jingo ballads. If we have given freedom to the slave and peace to contending tribes, if we have



opened the ports of our empire to the commerce of the world, there are dark stains on our dealing with other races. Have we ousted some of the Continental Powers from settlements which they founded ? Have we suppressed smaller and weaker governments because they blocked our way ? Have we controlled inferior races with a steadfast eye to markets for our manufacturers and careers for our sons ? That is the charge made against us by the other nations of the world. No one can doubt that when the underlying causes of this war are laid bare by the historian, our Imperial policy, in so far as it has been the manifestation of our root sin of a materialism which lives and throbs under a religious profession, will be held up to our condemnation and shame.

#### IV

*The second is in our social and industrial order.* No man can be content with the ideals and methods of our business life. There is no cause for unmeasured condemnation. All the greater businesses, managed by the stronger men, have been built up and are being maintained on the basis of fair dealing between buyer and seller, employer and employee. Yet the unrest of the people and the appeals of the prophetic voices among us are the evidence of vexing wrongs in our social and industrial order. The angry strife over

rights, the fierce denial of obligations, the callousness of the well-placed to the lot of the miserable, the absence of interest in, and of honour towards, those who toil, consummating in the alienation of class to class, are the open signs of this national sin. We all feel with a certain pathos the contrast between the refined and privileged life of those at ease and the hard and narrow lot of the masses of the people. It stares us in the face of the kind of houses where poor men dwell, the narrow and shadowed streets in which their children play their simple games, and in the stunted bodies and bleached faces of the toilers. Any one who walks from the West-End to the East-End of a manufacturing city notes the lessened stature, lowered vigour, and unhealthier complexions of the people. We need not go so far as to say that they are living in "the abyss," or talk loosely about "the jungle." We must not ignore the fact that much of the want and misery is due to sloth, improvidence, and drunkenness. Yet it is clear that we not only acquiesce in this social and industrial evil, but we participate in it, and sit high at the cost of others who are brought low. Our industrial order is designed to create the wealth of the nation, rather than the well-being of the people; to earn dividends rather than to ennoble lives; to advantage the employer, and not to benefit the employee. Ruskin thought that no man could sit at a table of luxury while his brother's board was bare,

and that no man could enjoy his "wealth" if he saw it to be another man's "illth." But Ruskin's noble thinking was always endangered by the want of a personal experience. Had he ever been poor, he would have known how easy it is to sit high, and to eat the fat, and drink the sweet of the earth without heeding the brother who is in mean place. No other sin is more directly the expression of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Our social and industrial order is the organized expression of our materialism.

## V

*The third is in the gratification of the undisciplined passions of our human nature.* Here our sins are so dark that we are all eager to hide our faces from them. Think of our degrading pleasures. What the plays of the stage, and the films of the picture house would become without the censor, no man, except the censor, knows. Think of the betting and gambling of enormous multitudes, with its base and pitiless exhilaration in the moment of gain, and its deep dejection in the hour of loss. This sin is infecting our methods of charity. It is creeping into the lives of the poor, and arousing the cupidity of our children. It is lurking in the minds of statesmen, who are being tempted to issue what are called, euphemistically,

premium bonds. Think of the secret sin of impurity with its entail of disease to the third and fourth generation. And then there is the most hideous sin of all—our drunkenness. Its waste and horror, its debasement in body and in soul, are so awful that one wonders at the apathy of those who are moved by any compassion at all. This self-indulgence has become not merely a custom and a habit, but a deep appetite and a lust of the flesh. Nothing so startles the quickened eyes of the men back from the trenches as the foul and degraded sots turned out from our public-houses. The first sight which too often catches the eye of a soldier on leave is a drunken woman clothed in rags, with a drunkard's child in her arms. But this sin and all the others of our undisciplined passions break out and raven only because we are living as materialists, whose whole delight is in what the earth and the hour can give them.

All of these sins have been the burden of our wisest and best for many generations. The most revered of our statesmen, the most impassioned of our teachers, and the most patient and pitiful of our social reformers have been instant in their protest, and eager in their advocacy of methods of healing. The war has set them all in a new light. Every thoughtful man is filled with anxiety as to what may happen when those who will no longer be trifled with begin to set the national house in order, after peace is declared. One thing is the first imperative, and that is that we realize

our sins, sincerely repent of them, and with humble confession accept forgiveness, and pass on to amendment. This great war will be forgiven its cost in treasure and even in life, if it be God's instrument to purge us from our national sins.

## VI. BROTHERHOOD—BUT IN CHRIST

No word holds the modern mind with a firmer grasp than that of brotherhood. It can be heard on the lips of all who address the multitudes. It is strewn over all the pages of our magazines. It has been woven into the constitution and even the name of our social organizations. It commands the close attention of the writers of our more serious literature. The war has bitten the conception of brotherhood deeply not only into men's minds, but into men's consciences. Brotherhood has become a keyword for all who desire to promote our social well-being. It enshrines the most compelling passion of many fervent spirits.

### I

But it is often overlooked that both the word and the conception have been born and baptized into the Christian faith. To this day neither is acknowledged, or even known, beyond the distribution of the New Testament. The whole stream of the power and influence of the conception of brotherhood can be traced back to a single deep spring in the teaching of Jesus—"One is your Master, even Christ; and all

ye are brethren." The word was caught up by the early believers in a tender rapture. We hear Ananias exclaim, as he grasped the hand of the most bitter enemy and ruthless persecutor of the Christian faith, "Brother Saul!" The word makes a constant music throughout all the epistles as it expresses the new relationship of man to man. Finally, the whole secret is disclosed, and the new word, unknown before in the Greek tongue, is set into Christian speech in Peter's brief counsel—*τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπάτε* "Love the brotherhood."

To-day the conception has been boldly, wilfully, brutally outraged. That outrage is not a mere flash of ungoverned passion. It has been considered and deliberate, as can be proved from the teaching of that school of German writers at whose head there stand Treitschke and Nietzsche. Like its Master, brotherhood has been scorned, denied, deserted, mocked, betrayed, crucified. Like its Master, it has been lifted up on a cross, and it has been drawing men's eyes and hearts to it. This is one of the things which all the world is a-seeking. All men are throbbing with the passion Robert Burns expressed in his simple lines, for the time when—

"Man to man, the world o'er,  
Shall brithers be, for a' that."

Yes, brotherhood is the word of power to-day! But the word and the conception can become realities only when the New Testament distinctions are

emphasized. It must be brotherhood, and nothing less. And it must be brotherhood in Christ. It must not be a mere comradeship, that thin and shallow idea which is already failing to find breath to make it vocal on men's lips. It must not be citizenship, whether of a State with narrow limits, or of a world-wide empire. It must not be a fellowship in the observance of common duties and the maintenance of common rights. Much less must it be a partnership in common privileges and rewards and coveted pleasures. There are three implications of true brotherhood, all set clearly down in the New Testament. The first is that of a *common Fatherhood*. It is an abuse and even a desecration of the term to use the word "brother" to two men when one of them denies a Fatherhood, which should be common to them both. It is, again, a *common kinship in the spirit*. Not a kinship of blood, for Cain and Abel were brothers; not of personal tastes and of common ideals, for great communities have been rent asunder by bitter contentions over their ideals and their likings; not of interests and advantages, for the clash between contending men of the same community make the saddest reading. It is a brotherhood in the expression of a kinship in the spirit, possible only to those who have received that Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration men cry with one voice, "Abba, Father." And, again, it is a *brotherhood of all humanity*. But such a brotherhood is possible only in Christ.



## II

This truth has been set in a single weighty and masterly sentence by Paul. The words become almost a chant upon his lips as the vision gleams before his eyes. "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free ; but Christ is all and in all." There Paul sets down the four deep, abiding, and bitter antagonisms which have always sundered men one from the other, and declares that these four antagonisms have been resolved *in Christ*.

The first is *the antagonism of race*—"Greek nor Jew." Races have hated each other with an unquenchable animosity through all the centuries. To-day the children of Germany are taught to sing the Hymn of Hate, and it must be confessed that the loathing within the minds of our people for the name of German is so deeply lodged that no man living may see it wholly expelled from our hearts. But no modern race hatred touches the intensity of passion with which Greek hated Jew, and Jew hated Greek. Both Jew and Greek would have met the thought of a common brotherhood with an ironic jest as utterly impossible.

The second is *the antagonism of ritual*—"Circumcision nor uncircumcision." We know too well in our own land, and even among people who call themselves Christian, how ritual separates man from man.

We know how the sacerdotalist refuses communion, and will not partake of the sacrament in the fellowship of a man of common faith and common prayer. We know that a Christian and a Mohammedan each regards the other's worship at the best with some pity mingled with contempt. But no zealous-eyed faiths of to-day look at each other with the irreconcilable antipathy in which the circumcised and the uncircumcised faced each other.

The third is *the antagonism of culture*—"Barbarian, Scythian." Between the educated and the uneducated, between those to whom the refinement of a prolonged education has become native and necessary, and those to whom it is repellent, there is a great gulf fixed. The modern German exhibits it when he professes a desire to impose his "Kultur" upon other peoples whom his pride scorns. But the modern antagonism does not swell with that surge of contemptuous scorn which the Greek and the Roman felt for the Barbarian and Scythian. Away on the confines of the then known world there lived those fierce foul tribes whose brutal lives, loathsome vices, and cruel hearts placed them beyond the pale of mercy. Of these the Scythians were the most degraded. The Roman soldier had a catholic mind. He was willing to inscribe every race, and even every faith, upon his roll. But to the treacherous Scythian he maintained a relentless hostility, and never gave quarter to a savage bearing the name.

The fourth is *the antagonism of social condition*—“Bond nor free.” We speak to-day with saddened and almost hopeless hearts of the breach between rich and poor, employer and employee, master and workman, class and class. But it is a narrow streak compared to the unbridged chasm between the free man and the slave in Paul’s day. The bondman was merely a chattel. His master held over him the power of life and death. As the years passed the distance widened, and the fire of a murderous hate broke out in the devastating Slave War. No mitigating laws, no ameliorating philanthropies, no personal courtesies, could resolve the antagonism of social condition in New Testament times.

Yet all of these antagonisms were reconciled in Christ. All of these contending hates were transformed into the love of the brotherhood in Christ. The men and women who looked upon each other with murder in their hearts gave the kiss of courtesy through their brotherhood in Christ. We can see them sitting down together in the Upper Room—men of all kindreds and peoples and tongues. We can pass into the little company at Philippi, and find even their names rich with proof. We see Luke and Timothy, and Lydia and Epaphroditus, and Clement, and Euodias, and Syntyche, and the other believers “whose names are written only in the Book of Life,” all joining in the common song of a brotherhood in Christ. We can take up the communion roll, to be found in the

closing chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and mark that every one of these antagonisms has passed away through the brotherhood in Christ. This is the miracle of all the centuries. We find it repeated in every continent. We recall that striking instance during the Chicago Exposition when a great company, comprising every European nation, and thousands of believers from all parts of America, met in the early morning, and sang to one tune, each in his own speech, that hymn which holds the first place in the hearts of believing men—

“Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

That is brotherhood in power and beauty, and there is no other which is worthy of the name.

### III

Other methods of attaining something like brotherhood have been tried. The first of these attempts is that of the clan or tribe. The next is that of the nation or race—a unity of those who are of one speech and generally of one blood, living within a definite geographical boundary. A larger conception is that of a world-wide empire, linked together by common interests, common ideals, common aims, and a certain patriotism which is an emotion of loyalty to the common ideal and its expression. To-day that conception has a fascination which is almost a tyranny

for the more powerful nations of the world. Another conception is becoming an endeavour of wise and discerning and patient minds. That is a *League of Nations* under whose laws and by the coercion of whose forces a breach in the outward commonwealth of nations shall not be permitted. But one may be forgiven if he doubts either the power or the permanence of these methods of promoting something which is like brotherhood, and wears some of its features, but is not brotherhood after all. We look on at the clash of interests, at the ferment of suspicion, at the distrust on the one side, and the contempt and fear on the other, and we realize that these break the cheap bonds woven by statesmen as easily as Samson broke the Philistine withes. We look back on the course of history, and our certainty that all these methods are vain is deepened. And then we look out on the European battlefield with the contempt for scraps of paper, the violation of the dictates of humanity, the deepening hate of nation for nation, and all the revelation of ambition and intrigue and plot, in callous defiance of the simplest honesty. We come to be able to declare to all well-meaning statesmen and patient economists, to eager reformers, and to socialists of every brand, that the hope of humanity is indeed a brotherhood, but a brotherhood only in Christ. Until men acknowledge a common heavenly Father, until they enter into a kinship of the spirit, and until the reach and range of their love and service is all humanity, brotherhood

shall not appear. It is only as the middle walls of partition are broken down in Christ that the dream and desire of a common fellowship shall be realized.

#### IV

Paul adds, in a sentence that seems all too brief, his Gospel of the way to attain this brotherhood. "Christ is all, and in all." When he declares that Christ is all he means that Christ Jesus, in His life, and death, and resurrection, and in His message of God the Father, is the revelation, and the doctrine, and the ideal of life, in whose acceptance all men become one in spirit, and are ready for brotherhood. Whittier puts it very simply :

We faintly hear ; we dimly see ;  
In differing phrase we pray ;  
But, dim or clear, we own in Thee  
The Light, the Truth, the Way.

That is not the whole message. There are unsearchable riches to be explored beyond this great, and simple, and commanding truth. But it is enough to enable every man to enter into that brotherhood, and to attain that new relationship between God and man, and between man and man, for which both the Hebrew apostle and the New England poet longed and prayed. Each of them could say, "Christ is all."

But Paul adds, "And in all." There he brings us face to face with the necessity of an experience. It is much to a man that Christ becomes all, and that

in Jesus he finds God, the Father, revealed. But there is something deeper and better, and that is to be found in the hour when we are not only in Christ, but Christ is in us. This is not the language of a moonshine mysticism. It is the language of clear experience. Only as Christ is in us shall we withstand the temptations which assail our brotherhood. Otherwise we shall slip back into the slime of the envy and greed and hate which assail us all, and make brotherhood a mockery. In the hour when Christ enters in, brotherhood also is born. [It is recorded that in the early days of the history of New Zealand two marines from one of her Majesty's ships went ashore, but lost their way in the dense bush. Night came on, and these two bold, resolute, and reckless men found themselves beset by fear. They wandered on without aim until shortly before midnight they caught the shining of a little lamp in a settler's window. They crept up noiselessly, fearful lest it might be some wild outlaw as savage as the natives. They listened as the level notes of a calm voice fell on their ears, but they could not catch the words the speaker was uttering. At last they heard the name "Jesus" spoken in the deep reverence of prayer. They leaped to their feet with a cry. They broke in through the slightly-latched door. They knew that they were entering into a brotherhood, and understood the meaning of that great prophecy, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that

Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father." This may seem a long road to brotherhood. But there is no shorter road, and there is no other road. Yet there is this comfort that as we travel along it some measure and instalment of the perfect brotherhood becomes the possession of our common humanity.



## VII. "YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN"

It is a commanding Scripture doctrine that there is an ascent of man. It is declared that both the individual and the race are passing on to "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." But a prepossession deeply lodged in the mind of this generation is that this development is an evolution of a native and original force within the soul. This progress to a splendid and inevitable destiny is an upward climb rather than an upward calling, in which man realizes an ever higher ideal, and achieves it by a glorious struggle. The assumption underlying this flattering dogma is that man is inherently good, and his evolution is due to the promise and potency of his spiritual nature. All that man needs is a more gracious environment, a better social order, a wiser education, and a more ample leisure, to work out his own salvation, and to march forward on a moral and spiritual pilgrimage. If only the race could create a thornless Eden, and men could live without strain or tension, and find themselves awaking every morning to ease and delight, they would not be tempted

to evil, and the race would flower out into moral and spiritual beauty.

## I

To this presupposition and its underlying assumption the teaching of Christ opposes its whole weight and force. It declares that man, by nature, is evil; that he is a lost and rebellious child of God; and that he lives in a world which has been ruined, and is hourly repeating the act of ruin, through a fall. The Christian faith teaches the truth of human depravity and moral impotence. By human depravity is not meant that human nature is wholly evil. There is ever the conscience for truth and purity, the hunger and thirst after righteousness, the enduring, if at times dormant, passion and quest for God. In the darkest human soul the light is never wholly extinguished. By human depravity is meant that the core of our being is tainted by evil, that every man has a bias to iniquity, and that through the whole frame of our nature there is moral and spiritual flaw and defect. That truth is recognized by every sincere thinker. Let "nature" have its uncontrolled issue, and every man knows that he will not be led into the Kingdom of God. Paul expresses the fact in his pathetic confession, "When I would do good, evil is present with me."

Suddenly, and while human life has been growing easier and softer, and the environment has been becoming more gracious and more appealing to all our

senses, the clang and clash of war has burst upon the world like a tornado. Deeds have been done at which historians will stand aghast. A conspiracy against our Christian civilization failed of success only by a single step. The liberty and the peace and the felicity of millions have been imperilled. Intrigue, treachery, and cunning plot have been practised with a cold, callous, calculated, and almost diabolical deliberateness. Teachers of unique force, with a striking gift of expression, have defended these aims with reckless daring. They have confessed that the goal of the race should be the production of a superb animal, a Superman, “a blonde beast,” who would realize himself by glutting his passions, crushing the weak, and mocking all meekness, and lowliness, and gentleness. This tide of insolent and brutal pride has risen until its bitter waters have smitten the face of Christ. But the issue of all this has been to convince the world of the folly and stupidity of its popular idea of moral evolution, and to make men sure that the assumption of the native and inherent goodness of man has been for ever put to shame.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling, whom we quote because hitherto he has stood on the other side, has put the matter with his usual clearness. “If the Boche had been quiet for another twenty years the world must have been his—rotten, but all his. Now he is saving the world. How? He has shown us what evil is. We—you and I—England and the rest, had begun

to doubt the existence of evil, but the Boche is saving us.”\* The outbreak of pitiless murder, the organizing of frightfulness, the triumph songs over the merciless dealing with the helpless, reveal that moral depravity whose lowest depth Paul marked when he said that they not only commit things worthy of death, but “have pleasure in them that do them.”

All our great Christian teachers have long maintained this now undeniable truth. No one has been more explicit than the greatest master of the human heart given to us in the last generation. Robert Browning, in *The Gold Hair*, sets down at its close the truth disclosed by that story of amazing depravity lurking behind a seeming beauty of holiness, in words which no man can question.

The candid incline to surmise of late  
That the Christian faith proves false, I find ;

I, still, to suppose it true, for my part,  
See reasons and reasons ; this, to begin :  
'Tis the faith that launched point-blank her dart  
At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin,  
The corruption of man's heart.

“Out of the heart are the issues of life,” said a still older poet. Jesus has given it the complete and perfect expression, “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness ; all these evil things come from within.”

\* *The War in France*, p. 25.

## II

As we look with heavy heart into this depth of evil we are aroused by the quiet voice that calls, “Ye must be born again.” Even had Christ not spoken His clear word enforcing this supreme necessity, we would have been taught it by the stern facts of life, and the horror of this war. Jesus expounds His own great saying in two affirmations, “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” What is more evident than this truth, that the men who made this war, and have devised its methods, have been hopelessly blind to righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Still more emphatically Jesus says, “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” He may have in high moments some dim vision of its moral and spiritual beauty, but unless he is cleansed and renewed by the power of God’s Spirit he will never enter in through its strait gate. To these words of the Master all the voices of the saints consent. Paul cries, “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.” Peter inscribes the character of the people of God, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.” John sets more simply still the issue and the power of this new birth, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.”

What is this new birth? It is a vital change at the core of a man's being. It is a gift of life, energizing what was dead. The truth is set down suggestively on the first page of the Scriptures, where we are told that God formed man of the dust of the ground, and "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Life is always the gift of God. It begins, and can begin only in a birth. What life is remains the deepest of mysteries, both in the natural and the spiritual world. But it is known by its powers and functions. When a man is born he enters a new world, sees a further horizon, awakes to strange desires, puts forth unwonted energies, develops new faculties. In a word, he is a new creature, with a new life.

This truth of the new birth finds its evidence in every sphere of life. In the physical life it is one of the simplest facts. A little child was born this morning. It found itself in a new world. Its eyes opened upon strange sights. A hunger it had never felt before awoke. New faculties stirred within its frame, and new energies were exercised. Day by day the life given is brought into exercise as its power develops into strength and joy. No man doubts the truth that without birth life is impossible.

The truth is equally clear in the sphere of the intellectual life. Here is a youth who is dull, dormant, apathetic. His teachers look on him with a sense of despair. He seems indifferent to the truths that

move other men to rapture. He is blind to the loveliness of nature, to the passion of poetry, to the mystic influences which sway other eager spirits, and make their faces shine. But suddenly some author becomes his master, some aspect of the truth commandeers his mind, some love passion awakes in his heart. The dull and listless years are left behind. A new light shines in his eyes. Undreamed of powers are disclosed, and those who love him rejoice that he has been born again. That truth has been marked in more than one of the most outstanding events of history. In the Renaissance of learning when the world awoke from long centuries of intellectual death; at the Reformation, when the re-discovered truths of the Gospel brought light and liberty, new desire, new hope, new moral energies to Europe; in the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century, when English-speaking men arose out of the torpor of an age which had forgotten God, we see that new birth which is the imperative necessity of a new intellectual life.

In the spiritual life the truth comes to its kingdom. Every soul is immortal, but every soul may possess not only a life that cannot be quenched, but a life of a higher quality which is called “eternal” in the Scriptures of God. That eternal life can only begin in the gift of God. Every man must be twice born, and in the second birth he must be born “from above.” There is an hour when the soul realizes its own moral darkness. There is an hour when it becomes

conscious that there are walls round about it which hide the eternal vistas beyond. There is an hour when the sense of moral impotence is complete, and casts the mind into despair. But in that hour there comes the touch of the Spirit of God. A new life begins to throb within the soul. A new world of truth and goodness and beauty is disclosed. A new conscience toward God and toward man is created. New hungers awake and crave new satisfactions, and find hitherto neglected and despised delights. The soul has *seen* the kingdom of God. The soul has *entered* the kingdom of God. The man has been cleansed as by water. He has been renewed by the power of the Spirit. However other men may wonder or may scorn, however other men may doubt and deny, he has become sure of God. He has seen Jesus. He has been given a far-reaching vision of God's rule and realm over all. He has been given the assurance of God's singular love and grace. He has been given a devotion to God's will. God's statutes have become his songs in the house of his pilgrimage. His chief shame and his too frequent sorrow are that his feet do not always follow in the steps of Him by whom he has been redeemed.

### III

The denial of the necessity of a new birth takes many forms and issues out into the advocacy of other methods and policies. There still clings to men's



minds the thought which befogged Nicodemus. The broad truth of a new birth is never denied, but it is watered down into some mere movement of the mind, some change in the psychology of the man, or it is robbed of its spiritual and mystic power by some dependence on privilege or ceremony. Nicodemus believed that for a man like him, of the Hebrew race, with a religious inheritance and noble traditions, this new birth was not a necessity. His mistake is not only made, but taught, even by teachers who are called after Christ's name. There are still men and women who are content with a vague intellectual assent to Christian doctrines. There are others who believe that men are born again by some rite, not so fleshly as that performed by the Old Testament priest, but even more superstitious, such as that celebrated by some sacerdotal official. The conception that some ceremony duly ordered and observed by ordained persons can command this new birth of the Spirit of God allows millions to drift on in a moral life which has not begun in a new birth. There are others who believe that all a man needs are new ideas. These teachers proclaim idealism as a creed. No one can doubt the influence and power of a lustrous and appealing idea, whether it be of a law, or a mode of life, or a goal for the race. But history has made it abundantly clear that a man may have a glorious vision, and yet find his delight in a life of which it is a shame even to speak. And every man who knows

his own heart is well aware that his hours of exultant delight in a noble ideal have often been followed by a descent into hell. We need more than an idealism. We need a dynamic. There is no dynamic for a new life except that which begins in a new birth. "Except a man be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." What ails the Christian Church of to-day, as even its enemies declare, is that it has millions of members who have not been born again.

All such teaching is regarded by many as mystic, not in touch with realities, up in the air, and impracticable. One of our modern writers, Mr. H. G. Wells (who has travelled a good deal further since he wrote these sentences) has expressed the situation with his usual directness. He is speaking with a certain prophetic insight of the world-shaking calamity which has come to pass. And he asks this question, "Could mankind have prevented this disaster? An idle question that—as idle as to ask, Could they have prevented the decay that turned Assyria and Babylon to empty deserts, or the slow decline and fall, the gradual social disorganization, phase by phase, that closed the chapter of the Empire of the West? They could not, because they did not, had not, the mind to avert it. What mankind could achieve with a different will, is as idle as it is magnificent."

Yes, it is magnificent, but is it idle? Come to the Mount on which Jesus sat and spoke to His disciples those Beatitudes, which shall yet be the anthem of

humanity. Come to the Lakeside, where Jesus calls His disciples to follow Him. Come to the Upper Room, where a little company is assembled waiting for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. Who are they? A few fishermen, a converted publican, a political demagogue with a new message on his lips, a few other humble and unassuming men, with a company of women, simple peasant folk at the best. But they have been born again. They are living in a new world. They have great hopes. They have a quenchless love for God, a supreme devotion to Christ, and an abiding passion for the good of men. Above all, they have a new will. Their will is to do the will of God. What have that little humble, obscure company done? They have not done so much as they might have done, and those who follow their faith have been even less loyal to the Lord and His purposes. Yet all that has been done to avert disaster and decline, all that has been attained in the civilization and true culture of the race, all that in our own day is proclaiming and extending the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, has been done by that little company and its successors. It is magnificent and it is not idle. Dark as may be the outlook, as we think of the contending hosts, this is the truth which has called forth the protest of humanity, and called in those who make their costly sacrifices, that they have the will to avert the awful disaster threatened by the militarism and the worldly

ambitions of a Christless aggression. In the power of God they will prevail. The message that comes to every man is this—that only as each man yields himself to the Spirit of God, and joins hand in hand with those who have been born again, will God's kingdom come, His will be done in earth as it is done in heaven, and all the greeds and hates which bring men into bitter enmity be purged out of the human heart.

## VIII. THE CONDITIONS OF FORGIVENESS

"I BELIEVE in the forgiveness of sins" is the most human note in the oldest Christian creed. But it is too seldom repeated with an accent of tender thanksgiving. The common conception of God's forgiveness has been less than loyal to its grace and costliness. We have grown into the habit of regarding it as an easy thing to forgive. "Forgiveness—that is God's business," said the apostate Jew, Heine, without realizing the strain and the anguish of holiness coming into touch with sin. God is regarded as an easy-going benevolence, Who passes over transgression by shutting His eyes to it. The prayer for forgiveness has become a pleasant chant upon our lips. All the love and grace and burden of the Divine Spirit, and all the moral and spiritual passion of the human soul in the experience of forgiveness, seem to be ignored.

### I

In this war a pure white light has been cast on this mystery of grace. We look out on the appalling scene of international strife. We see four nations which have entered into a conspiracy of hate and greed and long-purposed conquest. Their secret

plottings are being laid bare. Their disloyalty to their word and bond, their preparations for the assault, as far-seeing as they have been merciless, and their deeds of murder and rapine, make up a record which shall never be read without horror. Yet we are compelled to face the question of the forgiveness of these deliberate and wanton wrong-doers. The day will come when the "war lords" who have organized and persisted in these un pitying and vindictive cruelties will seek to enter into new relationships. In that hour all the thoughtless and shallow talk about forgiveness will hide itself away ashamed. Men will find themselves unable to forgive the sins of Germany with a few soft words. They will be compelled to understand the grace and the cost of forgiving what has been an outrage upon righteousness, and a deep and dark mutiny against innocence and honour. There will be no idle words about a forgiveness which is a profanation of mercy.

## II

What is the forgiveness of sins? There are two forgivenesses of which we have experience—that of man by man, and of man by God. With one of these we are familiar from both sides. We have forgiven, and we have been forgiven. Think of this as an experience on the side of the forgiving man. We all know what forgiveness is, although we may find it strangely difficult to define. Forgiveness is

fundamentally a changed disposition and spirit and attitude towards one who has done us a wrong. That changed attitude issues into a willingness to forego the penalty, a refusal to give the punishing stroke, or to be legal in exacting the pound of flesh. It consummates in the passing away of the alienation, and the restoration of fellowship and intercourse between those who have been estranged by the wrong.

Such a forgiveness shines out in the clear and arresting instances of the Scriptures. David brought back Absalom from his banishment, and rejoiced in the sight of his face. The prodigal son was clasped in the father's arms, clothed with the best robe, and set down as the welcome guest at the feast. Peter was restored with a special act of grace and given, with a tender word, a new seal to his apostleship. Mark was received again by Paul, and found his name set down with a loving mention in one of Paul's immortal epistles. The same truth shines out in the literature of our greater writers. Victor Hugo, in "*Les Misérables*," portrays the forgiveness of Jean Valjean by the good curé so as to describe, with a moving pathos, the changed attitude, the foregone penalty, and the passing away of all alienation. In a like spirit George Eliot draws her picture of Romola speaking, with tender relentings, of the man who had done her an almost unforgivable wrong. And Shakespeare sets in the lips of Portia that tribute to the grace of forgiveness which might have moved even Shylock to

mercy. In our simpler lives forgiveness presents itself in its beauty again and again. The clerk whose embezzlement is passed over, the woman whose shame is met with a word of tender compassion, the man whose slander, in a moment of envy, is overlooked and requited with a kindness which makes him ashamed, need no expositor of the cost and the power of an act of forgiveness.

Every man who has forgiven a wrong which not only robbed him of his right, but of his honour, will find that all cheap and trivial words about it die upon the lips. There are sins which both in themselves and in their circumstances most men find it almost impossible to forgive. There have been quarrels between almost lifelong friends which have been maintained to their dying hour. There have been wrongs for which no forgiving grace has been sufficient. Or, if the word of forgiveness has been spoken by one ashamed of his own implacable spirit, the other word is added, "I can forgive, but I cannot forget." Sometimes that is not forgiveness at all. At other times it is merely a truce of silence or a sullen armistice. It may not be possible to forget. We cannot erase from the memory what has been imprinted indelibly there. But the question is not whether we forget, but in what temper and with what accompanying feeling we remember. If we remember with unfading vividness the wrong we suffered, and if we recall, with a surge of resentment, the man who played us



false, we have not forgiven at all. But if we remember only with sorrow that the hard word was spoken of us, and the evil deed done to us, and with a regret that we were ever alienated and an unspoken compassion for the wrong-doer, we have forgiven and our memory becomes an instrument of grace.

We fell out, my wife and I,  
And kissed again with tears.

How moving and how expressive are the Scripture similitudes for forgiveness. Our sins are said to be cast behind God's back. They are removed from us as far as the east is from the west. They are cast into the depths of the sea. They are blotted out like a thick cloud. Though they are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be white as wool. This is the promise: "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." We cannot think of God forgetting, but both divine and human forgiveness counts the past as though it had never been at all.

### III

But look at forgiveness from the side of the forgiven. A man may be forgiving in spirit, willing to forego, eager to restore. But his forgiveness cannot pass to the erring one except under certain conditions. To utter a word of forgiveness to one who does not desire to be forgiven is to speak into the empty air,

if not to be scorned and mocked. What are the conditions of receiving forgiveness ?

The first is a *conviction of sin*. Forgiveness is not possible without a sense of sin. In much of the teaching of the present day the sense of sin is passed by with a colourless word. The deep cry of self-abasement is seldom heard. The penitent form is deserted. An awakened conscience, with its cries of shame and self-loathing, is an experience that few have witnessed. This lack of high seriousness in regard to sin is reflected in the light and frivolous fiction of the hour. A discerning critic of the French romance writers points out with an instinctive disgust their unashamed disclosures of sensuality. He says of Anatole France, the most distinguished of them all, "He lacked that fundamental experience of religion, a conviction of sin." Too many, even of those who would not defile their minds with a page of these morbid and indelicate romances, lack this same conviction. But a more notable and vexing example of it is to be seen in the recent letter of the Pope. Here is a man who claims to be a Christian teacher, and dares even to speak for Christ, and with Christ's authority. Yet, in his letter to the nations at war, there is no sense of the awful iniquity and the wanton outrage of those who planned this world-shaking aggression, and persist in it with hypocritical and even blasphemous professions. In the letter the Pope speaks of "complete and reciprocal condonation."

With Belgium lying prostrate, robbed, violated, desecrated before our eyes, the man who can classify all the contending nations together with such a phrase has no sure sense of sin, and every honest mind feels that until there comes a conviction of the unspeakable wrong, forgiveness is an idle word.

The second condition is *repentance*. There may be a conviction of sin without repentance. Repentance is a change of mind that follows upon conviction of sin. It was a shrewd guess which said that the man who is convicted of sin, but is not penitent for it, is in hell already. That was the spiritual state of those scribes who went out one by one, convicted by conscience, from the presence of Christ, when He said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." That was the moral condition of the rich young ruler who went away sorrowful, but not penitent. That was the state of heart of the rulers of the synagogue whom Peter accused on the day of Pentecost. Not until the man, who has seen the grizzly face of his sin, becomes humbled, self-reproaching, and wholly changed in mind can he desire or receive forgiveness.

The third condition is *confession*. A repentant man never holds his peace. The cry of confession, if no more, is upon his lips. Until he confesses, the door of mercy is shut against him. That is the truth Nathaniel Hawthorne has set forth with such sombre power in "The Scarlet Letter." It is the moral

condition still more poignantly revealed by the psalmist when he cried, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." So long as a man's pride, or vanity, or fear of the consequences of confession, seals his lips, forgiveness can never be his portion. This is the native speech of the man about to be forgiven, "I will arise and go unto my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned."

The fourth is *restitution*. A penitent man is not content with an entreating word. No one is more eager to make amends, to undo the wrong, to restore what he has taken away, to lift up what he has overthrown, to build what he has cast down. Zacchæus offering fourfold for the unjust exactions of his publican life is the constant type of the true penitent. Alas! as every man knows, there are wrongs which cannot be righted. There are innocences which are lost for ever. There are relationships which cannot be restored. There are solemn laws of God broken and dishonoured and nothing will undo the consequences. There are the dead whose hearts we have broken, and these have passed beyond requital. Yet every repentant man knows that such restitution and reparation as he can make are the sign and seal of his fitness to receive forgiveness.

#### IV

Here forgiveness stands in clear light. On the one side it is a forgiving spirit. On the other it depends

on a conviction of sin, a true repentance, a sincere confession, and a willingness to restore. It need hardly be said that it is vain to speak of forgiving Germany in her present mind and mood. It is equally vain to talk of terms of peace, although the very words allure our minds, touch our hearts, and answer the cravings of our fears. But there cannot be terms of peace between man and man, or between nation and nation, or between God and man, so long as wrongs remain unrepented of and unconfessed, and all possible restitution is denied. It may be, as many hold, that we, also, as a nation, should wear the sackcloth of the penitent. If so, and in so far as we have sinned, we need to change our mind and to come with our cry both to God and to man. But with the conscience of the whole civilized world, and even the dull and ungrown conscience of heathen nations, uttering the one clear condemnation of the mind and the deeds of Germany, it is clear that for her there cannot be forgiveness until the conditions of receiving it are fulfilled.

## V

But let us lift our eyes from the fields of war to the thought of the Lord's controversy with all sinful men, and the divine forgiveness for all true penitents. Here we see forgiveness in its perfection. On the one side there is a forgiving spirit. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." "It

behoved Christ to suffer." "By this is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." "He died for our sins according to the Scriptures." "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." There is nothing, there can be nothing, exactly like the divine dealing with sinners in any human analogy. Our conviction, our repentance, our confession, our restitution can never reach to the high demands of the infinite holiness of God. God Himself has become one with us, and in Christ has made the perfect sacrifice, and thereby our sins are no longer imputed to us, and God is reconciled to us, so that all true penitents may be forgiven.

"He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The writer to the Hebrews in the chapter in which he makes this declaration uses the Old Testament sacrifice as the type which helps us to rise to the perfect sacrifice it prefigured. There were three great acts in the forgiveness. The first was the presentation of the lamb—without blemish. The priest made no inquiry into the sins which the offerer realized and confessed. All he asked was that the offering must be without blemish. The second act was the laying of the sins on the head of the scape-goat, to give the repentant man the assurance that they were borne away into the wilderness out of God's sight, and were no longer a barrier between. The third act was the offering of the blood within

the veil. That completed the repentant man's sacrifice. From his hour of worship he went down to his house justified. So we, whether as individual men, or as nations, must come with our imperfect conviction, our too slight penitence, our faulty confession, and our often utter lack of power to make restitution, to depend upon Him Who is our perfect sacrifice. In such an hour the forgiveness of the God of love passes to men and to nations who are able to receive it.

What remains for us as a nation is to cherish the forgiving spirit and to be ourselves willing to acknowledge our transgressions. Our chief motive should be that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us. It may be that as we realize our forgiveness of God, and look out upon the world with a goodwill to forgive others, we shall realize that those who have forgiven, and have been forgiven, pass into a closer and sweeter fellowship than before. Yet, without conviction, repentance, confession, restitution, there can be no forgiveness of sins.

## IX. THE PROVIDENCE OF PAIN

THE whole world has been plunged into a fresh baptism of pain. The horrors of the field of battle, the torture of the wounded and the dying, and the deep-drawn gasps of the hospital ward, shadow every heart. We recall the desolated homes, the emptied lives, the broken hearts, the lifelong misery of the widow and the orphan. We hear Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted. Like Job, we face the mystery of pain and find it a shadow which will not wholly pass away. As the sun rises and sets, and the seasons pass in their succession and God seems to be silent, the faith of many falters and the question becomes more urgent—Why does God permit this pain?

The only answer to this question is to be found in the New Testament. The New Testament has been called the most joyous book in the world. It has songs even in the night. It abounds in great outbursts of those who triumph. Yet the sound of tears is to be heard by all who read it. It faces the great facts of human experience. It sets down without a faltering hand this mystery of pain. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."



“We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.” Even when life is over the saints are those who have come out of “the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” But the New Testament has one, and a complete, answer to men’s questioning. Pain is a part of the eternal purpose of God. Pain is an element in God’s providence. Pain is a feature of God’s ministry to men. The New Testament message is condensed in this confident sentence of Paul, “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

## I

Let us mark the modes and methods of this providence of pain. To begin with, pain is *God’s warning signal*. The whole source of pain is the breaking of wise and beneficent laws, in whose keeping there is man’s well-being and joy. To break the laws of health, or of cleanliness, or of purity, or even of kindness and courtesy, is to find pain waiting upon the transgression as closely as a shadow. An epidemic visits a community and carries off thousands to untimely graves because the sewage system has been neglected. A man is stricken down in helplessness and spends his closing years shadowed by the impotence of paralysis. All who know him recall his haste to be rich, and remember that he overdrove

himself through all the years. A woman reaches middle life to find that sorrow is a rising tide. But all who are mindful of her wilful, frivolous, self-indulgent youth find no mystery in her pain. Every broken law, even though its breach be in ignorance and in innocence, exacts a penalty of pain. That visitation passes out far beyond those who do the wrong. All the base passions have an entail of anguish. Injustice, greed, hate, envy, lust, have their issues in agony and sorrow. A little child lies upon a bed of helpless suffering. The physician who bends over its bed keeps silence, but he knows the reason of that incurable sore. A young life grows up with a stunted body, or a wavering and impotent mind. But the source of the deformity and the weakness do not lie beyond our knowledge. Even the great world tragedy of to-day, with its heart-breaking issues of agony of body and anguish of spirit, is due to the breaking of laws. "Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" The outraged homes of Belgium, the blood-stained uplands of Serbia, and all the carnage and wastage of the fair fields of France, are the outcome of broken laws.

Why has God bound up pain with the breach of law? He has made pain His warning signal. It is His uplifted hand to check men who are passing on hot-foot to transgression. It is His stroke to restrain the self-indulgent evil-doer. If pain did not follow

upon wrong-doing, if men could live recklessly and mock at God's laws, if they could throw the reins on the neck of their passions and practise vice with impunity, this world would become a hell. "A burnt bairn," says our homely proverb, "dreads the fire." A man smitten as he plays with evil, and a nation chastised as it follows a course of reckless aggression, are warned by God's signal of inevitable pain. "When God's judgments are in the earth men learn righteousness."

## II

In the second place, pain is *God's spur to progress*. The history of the race is a noble evolution. It is a record of an ascent of man to higher levels of character and attainment. Life is becoming richer, sweeter, more gracious. Its possibilities to-day far transcend those of a hundred years ago. But one spur to progress has been pain. If life were always soft and easy, if all men were lapped in luxury, if we lived in some Lotus Land where we could dream away the hours in delicious idleness, we would sink back to the sluggish life of the mollusc. If we never felt the whip of hunger, or were never roused by the dread of the powers of nature, we could be degraded to the bestiality of the swine. It is not a happy lot for a man to be born with a silver spoon in his mouth. It is the experience of pain, the sight of sorrow, the fear of life and the fear even of death, which become

God's spur to men who are climbing up the pathway that leads to their high calling as sons of God.

Think of the achievements of the race under this spur to progress. The wisest minds, the bravest spirits, the most patient and compassionate of hearts, are spending themselves in the alleviation of pain. The noblest brotherhood of to-day is that of men who are leagued together to lessen the misery of life. The craftsman uses his skill to make the air sweeter, the water purer, the path for our feet more easy, and the comfort of the home more open to all. The chemist searches nature that he may learn her secrets and provide healing for our wounds, and anodynes for our agony. The physician and the nurse, and all the ministers to the young, and the ailing, and the impotent, set their hearts on the lessening of human anguish. If there were no pain, no weakness, no cry of sorrow and of fear and of suffering, the world would go back to the waste again, and man would sink into the brute.

### III

In the third place, pain is *God's instrument of discipline*. We are touching a higher function here, and are in sight of a nobler purpose in God's providence. The highest purpose of God for men is that they should be conformed unto His likeness, and in that divine process pain is one of God's most delicate and tenderly used of ministries. It is His crucible

in which God sits as a refiner, watching His fires of suffering cleanse and purge away our dross, and leave us as gold purified. As we are chastened by pain, evil passions die down, stubborn prides are rebuked, high and selfish thoughts become ashamed. Sympathies become wiser, patient dealing becomes more tender, courtesy wears a finer grace. Pain is sometimes God's arresting touch. We have been going on in our own heedless way, self-centred and self-sufficient. We have been cherishing mean ambitions, playing with the fire of coarse temptation, yielding to the seduction of evil imaginations. Suddenly God touches us with the finger of pain, and we are ashamed and renewed. "Do you not think," asked a young woman in the full flush of a singularly happy life, "that God perfects some by joy and others by sorrow." She recounted the rare felicity of her experience—a youth of unclouded morning sunshine, a home life with a father and mother whose devout wisdom she revered, the early advent of a pure affection, her marriage and the unfailing wellspring of joy in her husband and her two children. Then she spoke of one who had found the shadow of sorrow in many of its darkest phases along the whole course of her years. She was told that no one came to their highest without being acquainted with grief. Two years afterwards her husband was smitten down. For five years she tended him with a sleepless and self-forgetting devotion. When he was taken from

her she bowed her head in a perfect submission. All who knew her marked the change. A deeper sympathy, a new power of understanding, a wiser speech, and even an added grace of bearing marked her out. She learned that God who made the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering has no other way with His own.

#### IV

In the fourth place, pain is *God's atmosphere of grace*. This delicate instrument of discipline does not work only upon those who suffer. It creates an atmosphere round about them which others breathe. It renews and touches to finer issues the most gracious chords of our being. A poor creature bearing every mark of a defiant degradation entered a tramway car. Her fellow-passengers, whose senses were offended, shrank from her. But as she left the car she stumbled and fell, and her hoarse cry of pain was heard by all. These hitherto callous fellow-travellers streamed out to her help. She was lifted by tender hands and carried to a place of healing. For the time every one of them forgot himself and his errand, and, in the atmosphere of pain, was renewed and transformed. A man lies dying in the Infirmary and the screens are drawn around his bed. His low moan and difficult breathing fall on every ear. Nurses and visitors come and go with hushed voices and soft steps. Every other

sufferer forgets his own weakness and lies in the stillness of a deepened compassion while the dying man receives the benison of death. They are all breathing the atmosphere of pain. Here is a family whose members have the gifts of a swift insight, a peculiar tenderness, an instinctively gracious manner of speech. What is the secret behind this refinement? There is a room within their home where there lies some dear one who has been a care to them for many years. As they witnessed her helplessness and ministered to her weakness, they breathed an atmosphere which gave the breath of life to the finer graces of the spirit. Here we understand something of the blessing which may visit mankind through the baptism of pain in this war. The whole world is breathing the atmosphere, and is being renewed to finer feeling, gentler compassion, more self-sacrificing grace. We read of those moving scenes on the field of battle where rude, rough-handed, careless men become transfigured with beauty. They stoop over the man who has fallen in the charge. They tend his wounds with a touch as soft as a mother's. They bear him to a place of shelter at the risk, and too often at the cost, of their own lives. What happens upon the field of battle is taking place in a larger area all over the world. The service of men and women, the outpouring of rich gifts to lessen the loss and the anguish of those who suffer, the building of the hospital and the nursing home, the wealth of the charities for the blind, the



wounded, and the maimed, are the clear evidence of the creation of an atmosphere which, as men breathe it, purges out all callous and self-regarding thought and creates deep compassion and generous sacrifice. How penetrating is Paul's word, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

## V

Pain is God's warning signal, His spur to progress, His instrument of discipline, His atmosphere of grace. But all of these sometimes combine to fulfil some high purpose of the providence of God. That high purpose to-day is the laying of an arrest not only on this war, but upon war for all time to come. What is it that will finally compel the nations now at war to seek for peace? What is it which shall meet and check the most wilful, the most defiant, the most reckless, the most passion-driven of all? What is it that will make the most hardened turn pale at the very name of war for generations to come? It will not be any fear of the entail of hate and revenge. That has not kept men or nations back from acts of aggression. It will not be any refusal to take great risks and endure great losses. When a man or a race is roused by some gross ambition, the loss of wealth, of precious memorials, and even still more of precious lives, will not check the passion. It will not be a conviction of the wrongfulness of war. War



will always seem not only noble, but necessary to men who maintain righteousness. What will stop this war and all wars will be the attendant and the inevitable pain. In her former wars of aggrandizement Germany knew almost nothing about pain. She crushed Denmark with a blow. She humbled Austria in a single battle. She despoiled France of her provinces in a triumphant campaign. Her people knew nothing of the cost either in body, or in mind, or in spirit. Every town broke out into jubilant song as the record of the victories came in. To-day her dead, her maimed, her broken in heart number millions. Every home is darkened by sorrow. Along with all humanity she will realize that pain is God's warning signal, His spur to progress, His instrument of discipline, His atmosphere of grace. We hear already the swelling sound of the protest of humanity. That protest will be heard in all lands, and so this great world-wide war, through its affliction, will work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

But this issue is to be reached only on one condition. "While we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen." Pain may embitter, degrade, and drive to revolt. If we keep our eyes fixed upon ourselves, if we remember only our own suffering, and if our horizon be only of earth and time, pain will visit us not with blessing but with curse. Nay, pain may even demean and lower the whole character, so that the one endeavour will be to escape

it for ourselves, whatever may happen to others. Even in this war we have become too familiar with those whose base purpose has been to escape the pain, with which it has smitten so many of our hearts and lives. In 1348 a plague broke out in Florence. Thereupon some ten of its wealthy citizens fled to a nest among the hills and refused to share either in the peril or the strain or the sacrifice of those who endeavoured to cleanse the city and to heal the sick. Bocacaccio in his *Decameron* has told us the story of that licence of speech and conduct into which they fell. They kept their eyes fixed on things seen. They viewed pain as a horror they would not face. They steeled their hearts against the misery and the loathsome dying of others. And that attitude always visits its penalty upon the soul. But when we lift our eyes to "things unseen," to the things of faith and hope and love, to God and His love and purpose of grace and to His eternal hope and home, then we can speak of our pain as "our light affliction," then we can enter into its grace. For as we look out to the unseen we take our stand with Him who looked forward to His cup, His hour, His baptism, and His cross, but looked also far beyond them, and, therefore, He accepted them all, and understood the grace of God in the providence of pain.

## X. THE ANSWER TO PRAYER

NEVER was our faith in the power of prayer more severely strained than to-day. Never have believing men presented their petitions with more intense desire and more continued urgency. Never has the ministry of intercession been given so large a place in our supplications. We have prayed for the vindication of righteousness, for the casting down of the oppressor, for victory for our arms, and for the coming of peace. We have prayed for our nation, and our Allies, and our foes, that quickened consciences, changed minds, and new amities might be granted to us all. We have breathed the names of our dear ones, who have gone forth to serve in this great cause, into God's ear. From chamber and from church, from the humblest worshippers in the simplest sanctuaries, and from the kneeling throng in great cathedrals the cry of the distressed has ascended. Yet the heralds of peace have not yet appeared, with their silver trumpets proclaiming the advent of a new day. The darkness is not past, and there is no sign of the dawn. Men have begun to lose faith not only in the prayer for victory, but in all prayer, and simpler hearts have found it difficult to pray in faith.

Confidence rests on the big battalions, the crafty diplomatists, the masterly strategists, and on the surge and passion of the merely human will. The whisper is passing within too many, that it is a vain thing to call upon God, and all the mystery of prayer has become a fresh affliction to the spirit.

## I

What can we do in such a mind and mood but betake ourselves to the Master of prayer? With Jesus there was no debate about the answer to prayer. He found no difficulty. He was held by no doubt. He was as sure that God answers prayer as that the rain falls from heaven. With Jesus prayer was not a vague cry in the darkness, and not merely the instinctive appeal of the helpless and despairing. It was the expression of a child's trust and hope and delight in a Heavenly Father. It was the perfect rest in One whose promises would not fail, whose love was the pledge that He would not forget. It was the request for such things as He had need of, to One who would give His good gifts to them that ask Him. But it was not always an utterance with easy breath. It was an energy of the whole soul, and the concentration of the whole will. It was a surge of the spirit which grappled with the Spirit of God. It was a wrestling with God's power, sometimes until the struggle became an agony, and the sweat stood out upon the brow as it were drops of blood.

## II

When we consider the prayers of Jesus two ruling truths emerge. The first of these is that *God, His Heavenly Father, is a personality*. God is not a Fate controlled by iron necessity. He is not a mere Dynamic, sending forth His force to pulse along great lines of law—fixed, absolute, unalterable. He is not a mysterious Power, working within a certain mechanical order, who makes for righteousness. The Heavenly Father, like every other father, is a personality. That is to say, He has mind and desire and will. He is a mind which purposes and plans, considers and estimates, discerns and judges. He is desire which loves and longs after all that is good and lovely, and hates with intense moral passion all that is unlovely and evil. He is will, and is, therefore, free to be moved by appeals, to be brought to decision by the action of others. He is will, as tender and gracious to His own as any earthly father. But He is not limited by any human ignorance, or unwisdom, or lack of might. He is infinite wisdom, infinite love, infinite power. “All things are possible with God.” “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.”

The second ruling truth is *the tremendous potencies of prayer*. That is where so many fail to understand and to share the mind of Christ. The reign of law in the universe seems to be so absolute and relentless.

The secondary causes seem to be so uncontrolled that the great overruling cause is constantly baffled and even held in chains. Few men have a faith which is strong enough to be daring in prayer. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" is the question which haunts us all when we think of our little, brief, petty life. Why should a sobbing human cry check the stars in their courses? Or to ask a question which troubles many silent spirits, Why should we require to urge our requests on a loving and merciful God? The shepherd does not wait to hear the bleat of the lost sheep. Why should God wait until the cry of His lost child reaches His ear? Of course, He has not waited, as we know. Yet the personal problem of the instant need which must be expressed in prayer remains. No such questions ever shadowed the heart or checked the prayer of Jesus. With Him prayer is the condition of God's answer, not because of what He is, but of what we are. Until we pray God's answer cannot reach us, and cannot work out His will. It is, as we pray, and while we pray, that the tremendous potencies besought in prayer come into force and operation.

When we think of these potencies we must not thin them out and throw away the great things among them. We must not think of prayer merely as a means of making the soul sure of God. We do not pray only that our minds may be brought into sympathy with God. We do not spend an hour in

God's presence merely to find relief from our sorrow and courage in our evil hour. We do not kneel simply that God's energy may pass into our spirit, and all our faculties be roused and raised to power, until we are filled with the fulness of God. "He giveth power to the faint" is a sober and solemn certainty. But beyond these potencies, prayer is *a force which works on the will of God*. For the one essential truth about a will is that, while it may be set unalterably on the attainment of some final purpose, it continually forms new plans, adopts new methods, adjusts and uses all available means, and makes fresh decisions, so that they all work together towards the end which is the purpose of the heart. Nothing is more unthinking than that prayer, at its mightiest, is a sweet meditation or a mystic rapture. Prayer is the power by which a man prevails with God. This is the supreme potency of prayer, that it moves the will and enlists the help of the Omnipotent.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with men that God should answer prayer? Why should men, who work such marvels with their limited powers, and persevere in their decisions, and refuse to be baffled by circumstances, deny a like power to God? A chemist can use a dye to stain in an instant the flower which a length of summer days has brought to its crimson glory. A sailor can set his lugsail and keep his course almost in the teeth of the wind. An engineer can seize and tame a cloud of steam and

compel it to do his bidding. An electrician can bring forth light with a touch, and send a whisper across the leagues of wintry sea. A man of affairs can adjust his methods, control his resources and carry out his undisclosed design in ways that those who serve him fail to understand. A father can form his plans for his child's training, and spend his energies and use his means, calling up powers which are a wonder to the child's ignorance. Some one's need or fear, some one's love or desire utters its pleading in a friend's ear, and at once every energy at command is set in action. Why should God be thought of as imprisoned within a material order, or as confined within such laws as our dim eyes have discerned? God is a will, free, gracious, resourceful, and prayer is potent with Him.

These two ruling truths of Jesus have received the age-long confirmation of Christian experience. One of the simplest facts of history is the answer to prayer. There is no believing man who cannot bear testimony that when he cried in the day of trouble God heard him and answered him out of His sanctuary. The rain fell on the land which was parched and desert. The storm was changed into a calm. The bread was multiplied. The dying were brought back from the gates of death. The night did not fall till the day's work was done. The iron gate opened of its own accord. "O, Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."



## III

But the answer to prayer is not merely a question of the will and power of God. Because of what God is in character, and because of His eternal purpose for man, and because His way is perfect, there are conditions we must fulfil else our prayer is but an empty breath.

The first of these conditions is *sincerity*. Any vain repetition, any mere chanting of words which have become idle on our lips and have lost all heart-throb, any uttering of pretty, rhythmic, melodious sentences, or any ostentation in which we think of ourselves is an offence unto God. We had better not pray at all than stand with the Pharisee in the temple and utter the language of the hypocrite. "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." Another condition is that of *the clean hand and the pure heart*. "If we regard iniquity in our hearts the Lord will not hear us." If we cherish a selfish purpose, if we beg from God that he may increase our possessions to enable us to live in luxury and to carry ourselves in pride, we need not wonder that the heavens are brass. If we allow some secret sin to lodge within us and defile the chambers of our imagination, the word upon our lips will not rise to the ear of God. If there is a wilful habit, a beloved iniquity, an unrepented wrong, we must first leave our gifts before the altar, and go to make ourselves right with our brother before

God will bend to listen to us. One trembles to think how many vain prayers are uttered by men, and how deeply ashamed in this present hour this condition makes us all.

Another condition is *importunity*. On nothing else does Jesus lay a heavier emphasis than upon importunate prayer. The value he sets upon it is attested by the witness and record of all who have prayed. When we remember Abraham interceding for Sodom, Jacob wrestling through all the hours with the angel, Moses appealing to God for Israel, David fasting and lying all night as he besought God for his stricken child, we see importunity in prayer. All the saints beseech the Lord thrice when they plead with Him about their thorn. So in counsel upon counsel, and in parable upon parable, Jesus appeals to men to pray and not to faint. "To him that knocketh it shall be opened." The friend who comes at midnight and will take no refusal leaves the door with the bread he craved. His own example in the last night in the garden gives the final proof of the necessity of importunity. For God is a will, and can be moved by the importunity of His children's cry. The truth behind it all is that as we continue in prayer our desire strengthens, our vision is cleansed, our hearts are purged, and we become able to receive, and become fit to be trusted with, the blessing we entreat.

One other condition is that our prayer must be *according to the will of God*. This does not mean that

it shall not plead against and contest what may seem to be, or what we may know to be, the will of God. It has been said with a seeming devoutness that the prayer, "Thy will be done," includes every other prayer, is the only sufficient prayer, and should be first upon our lips. But that contradicts the whole teaching of Jesus. In whatever order the prayer of submission may come in our thought it should be last in our speech. God bids us pray, and loves to have us wrestle with His will. That is the truth that stands out clear and certain from the prayer in Gethsemane. It was not until Jesus had spent the hour of wrestling with the will of God, of seeking to move God to find some way by which He might escape the cup, that at the last He submitted Himself to the will of God. That is the method of action not only in prayer, but in life. We may be smitten by a disease which we know to be the will of God, for it is the due penalty of our deeds. But we do not sit still and passive under it, for we believe that we can move the will of God to our healing. We may look upon the face of our friend and reach the chilling conviction that death is the will of God. But we strive to get between death and our beloved. We call in skill and care, and we are instant and constant in prayer. We do well so to pray. But we also do well to keep deep within our thought, and to have, at last, on our lips the humble words, "Thy will be done." Yet when we go in sincerity, with pure heart, and with

impassioned and persistent desire, to pray to God, we can be sure that while His will shall be done He has ways of answering, in His love and pity, that are far beyond our ken.

#### IV

Even when we fulfil these conditions the answer to our prayer may not be given, for other reasons. We *may ask ignorantly*, either because we know not what to say, or because we deserve the rebuke—a really gentle rebuke—"Ye know not what ye ask." We sometimes ask what we think to be an undoubted good, and were it given to us it would be our burden and our chafing yoke through all our years. A wise man once said that he regretted no refusal of his prayers, for he had learned how often the things he had been denied had been those which would have shadowed all his life. "We oft make profit by losing of our prayers."

Another reason why the answer is denied is because *we ask amiss*. We seek God's good to make an evil use of it. We seek some coveted endowment like a child asking a dangerous pleasure when the father would have the boy receive some higher good. One of the saddest lines in the Old Testament is that which says: "He gave them their request, and sent leanness to their souls." It is a part of the mystery that God should yield to men's persistence. We have often seen their ambition and their passion gratified to their undoing.

Sometimes our prayer is not refused. *It is only deferred.* That is one reason for praying without ceasing, for continuing in prayer, for labouring fervently in our intercessions, for refusing to be weary. The historic case is that of Monica praying for Augustine to find her petition for his conversion granted, even when it seemed impossible, after many years. God gives in His good time. His will may be moved to grant our request, yet only in due season will the answer come, and not come one hour too late.

All this sums up into one supreme truth, and that is that there is one prayer which can never be charged with ignorance, or with wrong, is never refused, and need never be deferred, and that is the gift of the Holy Spirit. We may have to wait our ten days merely because we could not receive Him a day earlier. This is God's best gift next to the unspeakable gift of His Son. It is God's best gift because it holds the promise and the potency of every other. If we receive the Holy Spirit then we shall walk in newness of life, our ideals will be ennobled, our ambitions will be purified, our prayers will be baptized with holiness and with power. "God will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly."

When we lift our eyes from the teaching of Jesus and look abroad again upon the field of war we have little wonder that the answer to our prayers tarries. Some answer never fails. As a nation we have as much cause for thanksgiving as we have for any

wonder at God's delay. As an empire we ought to have our song of praise to God, who hath done marvellous things for us. As individuals, we should cherish a humble gladness that so many petitions have been heard and so many requests have been granted. But as to our prayers for victory and for peace, is it not quite certain that until our imperial pride has been chastened and our ambitions ennobled, until our national conscience has been quickened, until both our streets and our homes have been cleansed, and until our individual lives, with their disloyalty to Christ, have been renewed in will, there are prayers we daily offer which God cannot, in wisdom and love, grant to us? We have faith in His goodness and His mercy that, after we have been disciplined, He will be able to trust us with victory and with peace.

*Future Life*

## XI. THE LIFE TO COME

“If a man die, shall he live again?” That is the question which has haunted men’s minds throughout all the ages. They have not been content with the thought of the immortality of the race, or with the consolation of their moral influence living after them in minds made better by their presence. The passion for a personal immortality is universal. Sometimes, as men have thought of the millions both of the dead and the living, and as they have regarded man as only the noblest of the animal kingdom, they have been tempted to a sad and stoical denial of any life to come. Yet, as they have reconsidered what a man is, and all his hopes and possibilities, they have risen to a triumphant certainty.

The savage buried his dead with the weapons of warfare for the happy hunting-grounds in the world unseen. The Babylonian and the Egyptian wrote their books of the dead, and inscribed their hope of the life eternal in massive monuments. The Greek lifted his eyes above the Nemesis of this life, and the opportunities it afforded, to think wistfully, with Socrates, and to dare more bravely with the great dramatists who pictured the ferry across which souls

were carried to their home. The Mohammedan went into battle assured of a paradise where his senses would be steeped in bliss. The Hebrew people, led by the Spirit of God, rose to a more splendid certainty. With some the world beyond was only a land of shadows. Men like Hezekiah mourned that they were cut off from the light and love of earth in mid-time of their years. But others, like Job, were sure that their Redeemer liveth, and, as their faith grew strong, they became the more certain that some would awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

The question meets us to-day with a fresh and undeniable insistence. Many have lost their dear ones, who lie in graves that never can be visited. Many recall the faith and love of those whom they never shall see again. The hopes and the reasons for a personal immortality have become more sacred. Every one sees that the significance of life would be bleached of its meaning if man has nothing more than this short span of years. As Carlyle said, it makes all the difference in the world whether a line of soldiers become so much "red clay" when shot down upon the field of battle, or whether they become so many liberated spirits. Then men feel the incompleteness of life even at its longest. They crave for a heaven which holds all for which they sigh. Increasingly the thought of life's progressiveness holding the promise of a perfection yet to be attained allures every mind.



The man who has reached his sixtieth year is possessed by the certainty that he has only begun to realize what he may become. Beyond this there are the injustices and wrongs of life, and the demand of the conscience for a retribution in a realm

Where the work of life is tried  
By a juster Judge than here.

Then, and supremely, there is the assertion of love with the instinct of eternity in its heart, confident that death cannot finally come between those whose pure passion is eternal.

All of these suggestions have their own weight. There are few materialists who deny them. There are no thinking men who disregard them. But no one of them, and not even all together, can bear the weight of the whole affirmation. We turn to Christ, and as we listen to Him our eyes are cleansed and our hearts are comforted. We hear Him say, "Because I live ye shall live also." Let us look into the teaching of the Lord of life and of death.

## I

The first thing to consider is *Christ's reserve*. The reticence of Jesus about the details of the life to come are a rebuke to us all. He lived amidst a community whose imagination ran riot in its pictures of the life beyond the grave. They were recorded in a rich and unpruned literature. They were set in symbols which laid hold on the mind of the people, and still gleam

in the hymns of the Christian Church. These apocryphal and apocalyptic writings have been most wisely refused admittance to the volume of our Scriptures. They detailed the scenery, the intercourse, and the service of the life beyond. Some of the New Testament writers, and especially the seer of the Book of Revelation, used these symbols. But it is almost a proof of Christ's divinity to mark how slight is His reference to the favourite images of the Jewish mind. Heaven, he says, is the Father's "throne"—where God reigns over a loyal people. It is "Abraham's bosom," where those who have trusted God hold close and tender fellowship. It is the "Father's house," within whose many rooms there is shelter and rest. It is "Paradise," in whose garden men may walk with God in the cool of the day.

The reasons for this reserve lie on the surface. One is that Jesus ever insisted on the supreme importance of the present life, and the awful issues which depended upon our use of time. There is no trace in our Lord of what has been called "Otherworldliness." He sanctioned no cloister life which fixes its gaze to heaven and forgets the simple humanities in a selfish concern for the soul. As a consequence, He never lifted men's eyes to any sight of a vista of crowded joys in the world to come. It was enough that that world was there what time the soul should depart to be with God.

The second reason for Christ's reserve lies in the

impossibility of telling men what the life to come may be. A teacher can use only the terms of the known in describing the unknown. It is the splendid office of the imagination to see the invisible, but the vision can be portrayed only in the symbols of earth and time. The constant temptation is to turn the symbol into the reality, and to degrade a spiritual truth until it becomes contemptible and incredible. Therefore, Jesus did no more than use the simplest and noblest of the symbols. As his apostle afterwards said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

## II

The second thing to consider is *Christ's assurance*. Jesus does not conduct an argument. He makes a disclosure. He does not give us a fresh revelation. What He does is to illuminate and make glorious what had been a dim and sometimes doubtful persuasion. "He hath abolished death and brought to light life and immortality." He took all our instincts and hopes and wistful reasonings, and He justified them by His clear affirmation. He did no more than call men to a confident certainty of the life to come. "In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you."

When we examine the bases of our Lord's assurance, we find them as clear and as simple as the assurance

itself. One of them is that man is a spiritual being. He accepted the Old Testament teaching in its cardinal assertion that man was made in the image of God, and that God had breathed into him of his Spirit and made him a living soul. He taught unwearyingly that man had both a body and a soul, that he was not part of nature, with nature's doom upon him. When He bade men call God "Father," He proclaimed the truth that man is a child of God, with a spiritual kinship which was not of earth and time, and with a relationship that would endure when earth and time had passed away. Man might walk the earth subject to that dissolution of the body which we call death. But he had a deathless relationship to Him who was not only the Maker of his body, but the Father of his spirit.

Another basis of Christ's assurance was his certainty of an eternal order and a spiritual world. There is almost no other word so often upon His lips as the word—heaven. His teaching implies and proclaims a realm unseen, an order hidden from the worldling's eye, a life in an atmosphere of the spirit, a fellowship in a world invisible. The consolations of men who were faithful unto death, the rewards of those who were loyal in their service, the completion of the incompleteness which every man mourned, were all certain in that immortal life where sin and sorrow and sighing should be unknown. He did not argue, and He did not prove. With calm and quiet confi-

dence He told those who heard Him that this spiritual life was theirs. As He spoke, and as He speaks to-day, the quiet still voice of the human spirit whispers its Amen !

But the supreme basis on which Jesus rests His assurance is—God and God's character. It was on God and his character that the Old Testament saints had pillowed their head as they died in faith. When God and His righteousness and His sovereignty and His love became dim the hope of immortality withered. So Jesus makes a fresh revelation of God, and a more tender disclosure of His character, and, above all, a constant declaration of His love to men, together with His own triumphant certainty, and then all the mist has rolled away. "Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." He spoke of Himself as "going to the Father." He assured His disciples of "the place prepared" for them. He told them that the very hairs of their head were numbered, and that not one of the little ones should perish. In parable after parable He set the Divine compassion and longing for men. When the Sadducees, who had given up the hope of a personal immortality, brought to Him their petty question about life in the world to come, He looked at them with a deep pity as He said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Then He corrected their coarse and sensuous views of the life to come which trouble us still. And He added,

“Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” That is to say that God, who made Abraham His “friend,” would not leave him in death’s dateless night. God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who desire a better country, “for He hath prepared for them a city.” The man who has become sure of God, and of God’s love and care, can face death with the confident certainty that nothing shall separate him from that love of God which is Christ Jesus our Lord.

### III

The third thing to consider is *Christ’s proof*. Christ’s assurance would have evoked the assent and strengthened the conviction of all men of spiritual sensibility. Those who had hungered after God and stretched forth lame hands of faith would have trusted less faintly the larger hope. But had Jesus died and been buried in that garden near “the lorn Syrian town,” the faith in a life to come would have been buried, for most men, in His grave. “I go to prepare a place for you.” “I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” These words would have been recalled as the daring poetry of a mistaken mystic. A quiet

resignation such as Huxley reached at the last would have been the highest mood of many minds.

And if there be no meeting past the grave,  
If all is darkness, silence, yet 'tis rest.  
Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep,  
For God still giveth His beloved sleep,  
And if an endless sleep, He wills, so best.\*

But Jesus rose again from the dead. He appeared to Mary, and to Peter and John, and to the men and women who had known Him and loved Him. They saw the print of the nails. They heard Him speak. They knew Him in the breaking of bread. The exultant cry rang through the whole company, "The Lord is risen!" They were overwhelmed and enraptured by the wonder and the glory of the truth. Its stupendous significances for Christ, and for human destiny, flooded their minds. "It was not possible," they declared, "that He should be holden of it." They became assured of the Father's love. They understood the meaning of the Cross. They exulted in the open tomb. They knew themselves also to be heirs of immortality. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." The splendid illumination of mind, the baptism with a quenchless energy, the elation of a joy that nothing could shadow, and a courage that nothing could daunt, are a great part and sure proof of that new assurance of an

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\* Cf. "Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley," Vol. II. p. 403.

immortal life, which came to them through Christ's resurrection. As these early believers realize that death has been swallowed up in victory they break out into immortal chants: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you."

#### IV

The fourth thing to consider is *the verification by faith*. The tremendous dynamic of the truth enshrined in the words, "Jesus and the resurrection," is to be seen not only in the New Testament believers, but in the whole succession of faithful men. It is the dynamic of an historical fact. But that dynamic is not brought in upon every man with the same stupendous power. The fact of the Resurrection does not create and quicken the hopes and energies of the soul until it becomes the solemn certainty of faith. It should not be a marvel that Jesus appeared



only to those who believed in Him and loved Him. The man who has not a certain faith in the unseen and eternal, to whom God is a mere word, and for whom a sense of the Divine love and care is a mystic possibility and no more, cannot be expected to see the risen Lord. Only the man who has entered, in an hour of transforming experience, into the certainty of God, can pass on to be sure of the other certainties of the faith. Only the man who has been quickened by the Spirit of God, and entered in through the gates of the temple, shall stand in the holy place. To this day it is the man to whom Jesus has spoken, to whom He appears in the hour of need, who becomes sure of the resurrection from the dead. When Christ's grace and love have taken us captive, when His revelation of the Father and the Father's compassion have become sober truths, then faith is ready to be assured that, through Christ, men are heirs of immortality.

It cannot be denied that many confess this faith and yet are living their lives as though they had never heard of a life to come. It is the charge commonly made by scoffers that did men believe in an immortal life, their lives would be completely altered. There are two answers to that cavil. We see men every day facing awful certainties, and yet living as though they had never heard of them at all. Compassionate and benevolent men and women live in luxury, while vast masses of the people drag out years of misery and degradation, unhelped and even unpitied. Men

indulge even in vices, while the members of their bodies are smitten with the disability and disease of which they are warned. Nothing is more certain than death. Yet millions live as though they had never seen a grave. The truth is that every man lives by some chosen and dominant passion. Esau sells his birthright for a mess of pottage. Saul deflowers himself of his sanctity for the sake of a few bleating sheep. Judas Iscariot betrays his Master for thirty pieces of silver. Each of them awakes, when the passion is spent, to that remorse which is so sure an element of hell. So, to-day, men do not doubt a life to come. But they are numb and apathetic to it because the engrossing passions of time blind them to its blessing and power. What is needed is not one verification by faith, but a continuous succession. The man who is content with one hour in which the eternal and the life to come become vivid and awful and entrancing, will find them fade into unreality unless he looks out to them with an ever-increasing discernment. Dale, of Birmingham, records that experience in which, when nearly sixty years of age, a new certainty that Christ was risen was given to him, and he went out to preach the living Christ with a new power.

The second answer to the reproach that men are living in seeming indifference to the life to come is the proof given by the testimony of the saints. We all know men and women who are witnesses to the

Resurrection, because through faith they are living under its power. That should be, and may be, the portion of every believer. To such faith there is no difficulty in the thought of the millions of the living and the dead. God's great mind and God's infinite knowledge are able to know and care for the least of His little ones. The rude savage of a Pacific island may think it incredible that a city of six millions of men should exist. Yet there is London, with its order and peace, its public life and social fellowship. The truth is that some of these difficulties belong to sense and time, and faith realizes that questions of sense and time are not valid in the realm of the spiritual and the eternal. Faith rests itself on that Lord whom it knows here and now. It repeats with quiet confidence, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

## XII. THE ETERNAL DESTINY OF THE FALLEN

EVERY affirmation regarding our eternal destiny rests on three truths. The first is the immortality of the soul. The wisest of the ancients pillowed their heads upon this quenchless hope in the article of death. Pagan literature wrought the desire into lovely legends of Elysian Fields, and the fear into tormenting pictures of the horror of the land of shadows. But with the Hebrews the hope became a certainty, and Jesus set the truth in the very heart of His revelation. God will not let His loved ones go. He himself was "going to the Father." The Christian Church set forth the Lord's teaching in the triumphant statement, "Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

The second truth is judgment to come. That certainty became secure more slowly. In the Book of Daniel it finds clear expression in the declaration, "And many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." With Christ, judgment to come is the inevitable issue. Its certainty does not depend on the solemn sentences in the Gospels.

It is the basis of all the parables where Jesus proclaims the separation of the wheat and the tares, the wise and the foolish, the faithful and the unfaithful, the sheep and the goats, those who receive Him and those who reject. The primitive believers wrought Christ's teaching into terse and clear pronouncements :

“It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment.” “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

The third truth is that we are saved, not by our works, but by faith in God, our Redeemer. No human sanctity earns the right to enter in through the gates into the city. In the white light of God's holiness every man's life stands out flawed and spotted. Before God's throne we must all take our stand with that poor castaway, of whom it was written :—

Owning her weakness,  
Her evil behaviour,  
And leaving with meekness  
Her sins to her Saviour.

## I

In the light of these three truths, what is the eternal destiny of those who have fallen in the war? Many have met their death on the field of battle. Others have gone down to their grave in the deep. Others have met the last enemy while they made their daring venture in the air. No man can be too definite as to

any individual destiny. "The secret things belong unto God." But the things that have been revealed belong to us and our children, and we are face to face with their interpretation. The principle of our interpretation is that the immortal soul, which passes to its judgment in the life to come, is accepted of God through a faith which has trusted God and come into relationship with Him. That principle is practically applied by Jesus in a sentence full of light, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of heaven's sake who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

In our application we must differentiate, and reach in that way the estimates and judgments which are possible to believing men.

Think, to begin with, of those who have died *with a confessed faith in Christ*. One of the outstanding facts has been the spontaneous rally made by members of all Christian communions. Every Church has its Roll of Honour, upon which are to be found the names of the flower of the flock. These had publicly confessed their faith, maintained their fellowship, and were growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. They went forth as defenders of the kingdom of heaven. We are sure that as they yielded up their lives, they were persuaded that He was able to keep that which was committed to Him. They were faithful unto death, and we number them among those blessed dead who have died in the Lord, who now rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

## II

Think, again, of those who have died *with a latent faith in God*. There are some who have never made a profession of faith. They have been worshippers in the house of prayer, and have given some support to the objects of the Christian Church. But they have never identified themselves with its fellowship. They have sometimes been critical, and even careless, about the things that belong to their peace. Yet many of them have had a latent faith. They have had a deep conviction of the being and wisdom and love of God. They have cherished a silent and yet constraining reverence for Christ. That was born within them in their early years, when they repeated their simple prayers and sang the hymns of their childhood. There is a record in Indian annals of two English officers, who were taken prisoners in a Mohammedan raid. They were not distinctively religious men. The Bible was a neglected book, and they lived without sharing the offices of Christian fellowship, and without the practice of prayer. They were offered their lives on the usual Mohammedan terms, that they would disown Christ and repeat the creed of Mahomet: "Great is Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet." As they faced this keen temptation their latent faith rose up in power, and they met the demand with a clear denial. They bowed their heads to the stroke of death with the sheen of a new joy in that Lord whose Name was seldom upon their lips in life, but to whom they were witnesses in the hour

of death.\* In this deadly struggle there are men who heard the call to fight for their King and their country, and they could do no other but answer it. As they kept their watch by night and endured the strain and peril of the trenches, as they went forward exposed to the deadly hail of death, and as they lay with their lifeblood ebbing away, their shy and hidden faith broke its seal, and they named Christ's name as their Saviour. They cast their souls upon His mercy, and they also entered into the peace that passeth all understanding.

### III

Think, again, of those *with an imperfect faith in God*. We all remember many who not only refused to confess Christ, but never had much concern as to what He could be to them. They spoke of the fellowship and worship of the Church with indifference, if not with scorn. The great thoughts of the Gospel which stir our souls to penitence and desire were nothing to them. But they cared with a deep interest for the things which Christ honoured and proclaimed. They revered righteousness and truth. They had a true sense of honour, and were filled with compassion for those in need. They were chivalrous in their help for the outcast and the man who is down. They were filled with a moral indignation at the wrongs of the poor. So when the deeds of hate and greed were done, when a merciless brutality wrought havoc among the defenceless, and a coarse and bestial sensuality ravaged

\* cf. Sir Alfred Lyall, *Theology in Extremis*.



the helpless of Flanders and of France, they rose up and left house, and parents, and wife and child for the kingdom of heaven's sake. As certainly as the Covenanters at Airds Moss rose up in defence of freedom to worship God according to their consciences ; or as the folk of the Netherlands gathered round William of Orange to confront the brutal might of Spain ; or as the men of the Northern States of America enrolled to purge their land from the degradation of slavery, these men went out in faith, although it was imperfect. It was dim in its vision, but it was a vision, and they loved not their lives unto the death, but overcame by the word of their testimony, and the blood of the Lamb, whose sacrifice had moved them to their chivalry.

The Old Testament Scriptures have inscribed a singular and illuminating instance of this imperfect faith. When the Israelites sent their two spies across Jordan they found a lodging in the house of Rahab the harlot. She was a woman of Canaan, and her life was dark with shame. Her knowledge of the God of Israel was dim and shadowy. Her conception of the mission of His people was dark and uncertain. Her ideal of life faltered at the very thought of purity. But she had faith enough to risk her all, and to hazard her life for the cause of the God of Israel. We find her name written in the great roll of honour of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as one whose faith, imperfect indeed, was counted to her for righteousness. So these men and women who have never known, in a conscious experience, the power of the love of Christ, who have

hid their faces from Him, yet in the hour of their need have had faith in what He stands for. They shall not perish, but shall have their names written in that roll of honour which is called the Lamb's Book of Life.

## IV

Think, again, of those who have died *with a freshly born faith in God*. They have been wilfully and openly defiant. They have never prayed. We need not uncover too rudely and barely the dark secrets of their lives, or describe the wild mutinies of their reckless years. Yet many of these men were wondrously pitiful in the hour of another's need, were strangely gentle in word and deed as they bore the wounded, were unselfish and loyal in their comradeship, and were nobly heroic in the saving of the lives of others at the cost of their own. In the last hour many of these men stepped out steadfastly to certain death in the power of a faith which was freshly born within their souls.

An American poet, John Hay, has told the story of Jim Bludso, the engineer of the *Prairie Belle*, a steamboat on the Mississippi River. He was a man of evil life, utterly careless of the obediences of purity. The *Prairie Belle* was an old worn-out vessel, and newer boats easily passed her in the race on the river. One night she was being driven at high pressure, not to be left too far behind. Fire broke out from under her boilers, and the whole vessel was enveloped in flame. Her head was turned toward the river bank, and the terrified passengers crowded

into her bows. Bludso stood by his engines in the midst of the fire, and held her against the river bank until every other on board was saved. The poet closes his story with these lines :—

He weren't no saint—but at jedgment  
 I'd run my chance with Jim,  
 'Longside of some pious gentleman  
 That wouldn't shook hands with him,  
 He seen his duty, a dead sure thing—  
 And went for it thar and then ;  
 And Christ ain't going to be too hard  
 On a man who died for men.

We question our poet's theology. A man's evil past is not to be atoned for or blotted out by a single heroic deed at the close of life. But the poet does not read deeply enough into the significance of this sacrifice of Jim Bludso. He does not discern that the man who stood by his engine while the flames wrapped him round as a winding sheet was a believer, dying for a faith which had been born within. He was a crude-minded, sin-laden, dim-visioned man ; but he was moved and motivated by Him who had died for men, and in that faith he followed in Christ's steps.

## V

Behind such an experience there is a spiritual truth which is too often forgotten. It is that faith is always born in a moment. The vital thing in life is the moment. We fall in love, or conceive a passion of hate, in a moment. We yield to the temptation which desecrates our souls and mars our life in a

moment. We make our great decisions and pass from darkness to light, and from life to death, in a moment. Browning in *The Ring and the Book* describes this fact in his own dramatic way. He tells us that for the main criminal of that story, Guido, he sees no chance. He was a man so corrupt in heart, so coarse and callous in passion, that there seemed no possibility of mercy for his soul. But the poet describes a night when he stood above Naples, and the heavens were covered with a pall of cloud. The hills and the sea and the city itself were hidden from his straining eyes by the inky blackness. Suddenly a broad flash of lightning illumined the heavens, and there stood out the distant hills, the white foam of the waves, and the streets and spires of the city. The poet adds :—

So may the truth be flashed out by one blow.  
And Guido see—one instant—and be saved.

That is the truth in salvation which we forget. It is the truth which makes the story of the rich young ruler so tragical. His interview with Christ did not last five minutes. For those five minutes he was face to face with the strait gate. He came to his decision, and refused the call—in a moment. He made the plunge and disappeared, and we never hear of him again. In the same way, the penitent thief, after a life stained with crime, and while he was paying its just penalty, strained out toward Christ with the cry, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." It was faith born in a moment, and the response to it was, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

## VI

To-day there are men, like Jim Bludso, who are lying, after rude burial, on the field where they fell. Yet as they faced death, their faith in Him, whose pleading voice they had often denied, was freshly born within them. They saw dimly enough what He was and what He had done, and in their own daring way they made the great acceptance, and surely they also passed to be with Him. We may shrink from this conclusion as we remember the course of their lives. They were so deeply dyed with evil that we may hesitate to cherish so great a hope. But, in the light of God's countenance, man does not differ from man so greatly as we sometimes think. It is always a poor, vile sinner whom Christ brings into His house of wine. If all our thoughts and purposes, and if our secret imaginations were revealed, it would be found that we do not differ one from the other so much as some men dream.

There are others, perhaps many others, about whom we must be silent. They went forth not merely shrinking, but unwilling to bear their part in this great struggle. To use the word "sacrifice" about either their living or their dying is to profane it. They did ignoble deeds even upon the field of battle. They sought unworthy shelter in the hour of peril. They died as they fled from their post, and they passed into the life to come with a callous word upon their lips. What shall we say? We leave them to the judgment of Him who knoweth all.

### XIII. REST FROM WAR

THE passing of war is the dream and desire of all Christian men. It was the message of the prophet that men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more. It was the song of the angels—"Peace on earth, goodwill to men." It was the assurance of the Apostle that Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition between race and race, so making peace. It was the vision of the seer who saw, beyond the leaping flames of a world-wide battlefield, the coming of the city of God, where there shall be "No more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." It was the dying bequest of Christ. Despite that strangely neglected saying, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword," His last gift to troubled men was the gift of peace. Longfellow sets the dream and desire in tender cadences:

Down the dark future, through long generations,  
The sounds of war grow fainter and then cease,  
And, like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,  
I hear the voice of Jesus Christ say—Peace.

But war has not ceased. To-day a strife, fierce, callous, deadly, with tragic issues of death and pain and tears, holds the whole world in its grip. The conscience of Christendom has long made its protest

against unrighteous war. But the conscience is as absolute in condemnation of an unrighteous peace. God Himself, be it said with reverence, will not make an unrighteous peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Facing a haughty ambition and a pitiless aggression the righteous protest of war remains—a stern necessity. When shall all lands have rest from war? In the fulness of the time when the Kingdom of God shall reign in all men's hearts. Then, but not till then. Until then we shall require locks on our doors, police in our streets, witnesses to our agreements, judges in our courts. Until then we shall require war as an instrument of righteousness :

And now we watch and struggle,  
And now we live in hope,  
And Zion, in her anguish,  
With Babylon must cope.

## I

Now, what is war? War is the use of force to vindicate righteousness, to compel the fulfilment of obligation, to redress wrongs, to defend the oppressed, in a word, to uphold the sanctity of law. When a law has been made, obedience to it must be exacted. To allow a law to be broken, and the obligation to truth and justice and purity enshrined in it to be mocked, is to compromise with iniquity, and to become confederate in crime. Authority, law, penalty are bound together by a supreme necessity. In the last resort law can be upheld only by the employment of force.

Think of this truth first in regard to *war as waged*



*by society.* Human society, with the civilization it conserves, has gathered itself into law-controlled communities. Their ideals of life have been expressed in carefully drawn statutes. The authority to administer the code of law has been lodged in duly appointed magistrates. When a defiant law-breaker is convicted of an offence he is sentenced to a due punishment. That is war. But society does not stop short at the penalty of the prison cell or the exaction of an impoverishing fine. Let the criminal be convicted of a deliberate murder committed under the motive of a calculated revenge, let him be proved to be a poisoner, or an assassin, or a foul miscreant who commits a series of loathsome outrages on helpless women, and society does not hesitate to put the power of the extreme penalty into the hands of the judge :

Who, from the judgment-seat,  
Sends the pale convict to his last retreat  
In death ; though listeners shudder all around,  
They know the dread requital's source profound.

Even Cobden, one of the most persistent advocates of non-intervention, boasted that the militant arm of the law was stretched out to defend the meanest pauper in the land. But that is war.

Think of *war as waged by a nation.* A nation expresses its ideal of international relationships and obligations in precisely-framed and solemnly-sealed treaties. When these obligations are denied, and these treaties are torn up as scraps of paper, international law is mocked, and righteousness is outraged. Then force, although not a final remedy, is embodied



in the armed hosts which are sent as officers of justice to uphold the sanctity of law.

Queen Elizabeth lit the beacon fires of England to repel the assault of the Spanish Armada upon the peace and freedom of the people. The Puritans impeached and overthrew the imperious and bigoted Government of their day when it denied the civil and religious liberties of the nation. The Covenanters rose in their feeble strength against the aggression, in the name of religion, upon their right to worship God as they found it sanctioned by His Word. The citizens of the American colonies rebelled against an unjust Government, which infringed the rights of a loyal people, and imposed a statute upon them that freemen dared not endure. Our own Government sent out its armed cruisers to hunt down the slave-traders, and had no scruple when their warships trained their guns on those who were throwing the helpless negroes into the sea, in the hope that they themselves might escape. It was to vindicate righteousness, to redress wrongs, to defend the oppressed, to uphold the sanctity of the law that these wars were made. Who will declare these brave hearts to have been in the wrong?

Think, again, of war as *waged by an individual*. It is not often that an individual is called upon to take up the sword. But there are times when one man must lift his single arm, make his protest and strike his blow for truth, for freedom, for the rescue of those who are under the heel of an oppressor. Two students

were passing up to their college through the street which led to its gate. At the corner of a lane they came upon a man, half-mad with drink and beside himself with anger, holding a hunchback girl in his rough grasp, while he kicked her until her heart-rending screams could be heard a hundred yards away. They looked around for an officer of the law, but none could be seen. They ran to the spot and expostulated with the brutal wrong-doer. He assailed them with a murderous lunge. They closed with him, so that he was compelled to relinquish his grip of the child, and in the struggle which followed he suffered so that he bore the marks on his body as long as he lived. Had this inhuman father been killed in such an encounter, or had one of these young men lost his life in the rescue of the helpless child, the whole action would have been fully justified. There are times when a man must defend his own life, when he must protect the honour and the chastity of his dearest, as has happened in India, by his own right arm. There are occasions, as William Tell found when he faced the Austrian tyrant, and John Brown of Harper's Ferry realized when he resisted the slave traders, on which one man must lift his single arm and strike the blow which vindicates righteousness and enforces justice and truth. That is war.

## II

But some may reject these conclusions, based on the evidence of history, on the ground that conscience,

when enlightened, condemns all war. Many declare that war is not in accordance with the teaching of the Scriptures, and that it is a denial of the mind and teaching of Christ. If we take up the Old Testament Scriptures we find no support for this affirmation. The commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is sometimes cited as though it were decisive. But that great word must be interpreted in the light of the Old Testament, and by the whole trend of its teaching. We read in another Scripture, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made He man." We read again, "The murderer shall surely be put to death." That remained one of the accepted statutes of Israel. The sixth commandment is simply a forbidding of the act of murder, and a denial of the right of private and vindictive revenge. That truth stands out clearly when we think of the commandment to have war with Amalek, which stands almost upon the same page as that of the Ten Commandments, and of the campaigns of Joshua as he rooted out the foul Canaanites of the Jordan valley, and of the cry of Gideon when he freed Israel from her oppressors, and of the chivalrous championship of David when he slew Goliath. These are sufficient to show that the Old Testament Scriptures regard war, in a righteous cause, as a part of the service of God.

But while many would admit that the teaching of the Old Testament is clear, they declare that the nobler truth is revealed in the correcting counsels of Jesus Christ. Yet upon the very threshold of the Gospel we see Jesus, aroused to a noble zeal for

righteousness through the violation of the holiness of God's temple, arming Himself with His scourge of small cords, and thrusting forth those who profaned its sanctity. That was war. Consider that clear word spoken by Jesus, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace" (Luke xi. 21). What is that but a justification of a defensive war? Throughout the New Testament the service of the soldier is regarded as a noble vocation. The converted centurion was not called upon to ungird his sword from his thigh. Paul selects the soldier as one whom other men may imitate. "No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." But he sets the truth as he understood it, in a clear and unequivocal statement. He writes to the Christian people of Rome that although the Roman magistrate was a heathen, yet he was the minister of God to them. He sat in the seat of authority bearing the sword, with the power of life and death, and in his high office he was entitled to obedience (Rom. xiii. 1-5). So far as the example of Christ and the counsels of the New Testament are concerned, the use of force and the making of war find clear approval.

### III

But another position is taken by some who refuse to accept these conclusions. Their contention is that although the New Testament seems to sanction war, yet its principles, when rightly stated, clearly condemn it. They argue that its attitude to war

is the same as that to slavery, and that when the whole truth emerges Christ is seen to have put His ban on war. They believe that the better way is to desist from force, and to offer no resistance. Then the aggressor will be awakened and convicted of evil doing, and war will cease. In support of this position they recall some unforgettable words of Jesus, and maintain that these are His final message. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also." They remind us of that warning word to Peter: "Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they which take the sword shall perish with the sword." They call up that picture of His supreme hour. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." From the time of George Fox to Tolstoi, and those who accept that inconsistent teacher's counsels, the life of Jesus and these words from His lips are interpreted as a condemnation of war.

Apart from the first duty of translating a vivid, concrete, Oriental saying into modern terms and interpreting the principle of its inner thought, this conclusion overlooks a vital distinction. Christ's counsels and His example refer only to the conduct of *an individual retaliating a private and personal wrong*. This distinction between tamely permitting the violation of a law, the obligation of enforcing a treaty, the solemn duty of protecting and defending

the weak, and an act of lawless retaliation because of one's own personal and private wrong is continually overlooked. There are imperative obligations, inherited liberties, solemn rights, sacred trusts, which every man must defend whatever be the cost. There are the lives and liberties, the honour and the chastity of others, which no man can see outraged and pass by on the other side. But there are personal profits, personal privileges, personal advantages, even to life itself, which are so peculiarly a man's own that he can do with them as he will.

Look at this truth in the light of three instances. When Isaac camped in the Valley of Gerar he dug a well. The men of Gerar said that the water was theirs, and fierce contention broke out between the herdmen. Isaac did not contest their claim, unjust as it was. He moved further up the valley and dug another well. Again the same envious strife ensued. Once more Isaac did not resist the evil. He moved still further up the valley and dug another well, and was now allowed to remain in peace. But he was not defending a treaty, or a sacred trust, or a solemn obligation. He was suffering merely a personal loss, an individual wrong, and therefore, in his fine anticipation of Christ's counsel, he gave way.

The Apostle Paul, as his pathetic record describes, was often maltreated. He suffered without reclaim and without threatening. But when he was cast into prison at Philippi and beaten, without trial, by the Roman authorities, although he was a Roman citizen, he appealed. In his person the sanctity of the law had been violated, and he refused to submit.

Rather than condone this wrong he made his appeal to Cæsar. He knew that the penalty of a wrong to a Roman citizen was death. A blow on the face or the seizure of his cloak would have been passed by. But he called in the force of the law to uphold its sanctity.

And so we come to the supreme example. When Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane and led to Caiaphas and then to Pilate He offered no resistance. He did most significantly protest on behalf of His disciples: "If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." He gives a hint that, under certain circumstances, twelve legions of angels were at His command. But He knew that it was the will of God that He should suffer. He knew that the wrong was a peculiarly personal wrong. Had one of those dear to Him been touched, or had a little child been maltreated, He would have made His protest instant and absolute. Jesus went to His cross in an act of personal submission, in a clear exposition of that truth that a man may do what he will with his own, and so fulfil the will of God. Above all, He yields His life to vindicate righteousness and to ransom those who are enslaved.

What is at stake in this war? It is not a personal, or private, or even national interest. It is the whole fabric of our Christian civilization. It is the liberty of weaker nations to work out their destiny. It is the peace of humanity for generations to come. This war is the protest against the wilful violation of treaties and the conscienceless betrayal of righteousness. These are sacred trusts. They should be



dearer than life. It is true that if a man take the sword he will perish with the sword. But that saying is a proverb expressing the undoubted truth that the man who shares in war must be prepared to pay the cost of war. There have been refusals to use this instrument of war in the past, and these refusals are among the gravest wrongs of history. It is possible for persecution to exterminate a people if only it is ruthless and thorough. Persecution will not convert, but it will silence, and will silence in death. It is possible for greed and hate to extinguish not only a nation's liberties, but its life. When the Spanish Inquisition was dealing out its death penalty, when the Romish Church was rooting out the French Huguenots with its crowning infamy of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, when the Turks were slaughtering the helpless Armenians until their cries filled the ears of all Europe, the one high duty of surrounding nations was war. The curse still rests upon them because they came not to the help of God against the mighty. That nation stands condemned at the bar of God which refuses, for the sake of its own safety or prosperity, to draw the sword to deliver the oppressed. No man can claim to follow Christ who will not step in, both to risk life and to take it, so as to redress the hideous wrongs of the weaker nations of Europe, and to cast down the Antichrist of militarism which is threatening the existence of the kingdom of God. When that has been done there shall be rest from war. Then—not until then!







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